

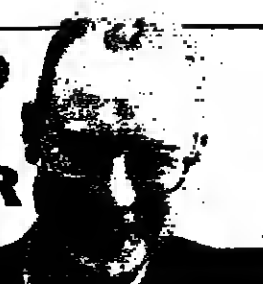
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THE EYE



THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 5 June 1998 45p (IR 50p) No 3,629

Labour MPs revolt against the party line

By Anthony Bevis,
Colin Brown and
Fran Abrams

LABOUR fear and loathing of the Government machine broke out yesterday after the whips went too far in the drive to control MPs.

Senior backbenchers are enraged by a plan to take central control of candidate selection for the next election, threatening to oust non-conformists from their Commons seats.

The backlash has even spread to the ranks of the Cabinet, with Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott and Secretary of State for Education and Employment David Blunkett reportedly opposing the whips' plans to dictate the names of the three MPs who are to be elected to the party's ruling national executive committee (NEC).

Unhappy and fearful Labour MPs - who all demanded anonymity before speaking to *The Independent* - yesterday compared the whips to the East German secret police, the Stasi. In Prime Minister's Commons question time on Wednesday, Andrew Mackinlay, Labour MP for Thurrock, delighted all sides of the House with a brave question in which he urged Tony Blair to discourage fawning and obsequious questions, and encourage scrutiny and accountability of his executive by MPs.

The Prime Minister's answer was ambiguous. But there has been no ambiguity in the whips' proposals.

There was outrage at a private meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) on Wednesday, when MPs debated a paper on "Parliamentary Selection Consultation". The document said: "The Chief Whip will present a report to the NEC detailing unauthorised absences, principled abstentions and votes against the whip of all members of the PLP and may recommend to the NEC that they interview MPs with exceptionally poor records. This information will be in the public domain..."

Inside

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The plan even included a suggestion that MPs in safe Labour seats might be challenged by "chicken run" Commons colleagues who could lose their more marginal constituencies at the next election. One senior MP said yesterday: "You see eyes of the young ones who got in by not many votes - their eyes lit up at the prospect of challenging all the old farts, and heating them."

Another long-standing MP said: "They are trying to get a permanent change in the kind of person we select as MPs. They want people who shout,

"What's the line? What's the line?" all the time."

At Wednesday's PLP meeting, David Gardner, the party's assistant general secretary, said there was no central plan to fill the Labour benches with a bunch of Blairite clones. But few older MPs are convinced.

The revolt against plans to control membership of the NEC came on two fronts yesterday: with strong signals of cabinet-level backing for Dennis Skinner to remain a parliamentary member of the NEC; and with left-wingers leading the running in constituency party nominations for the rank-and-file section.

Mr Prescott and Mr Blunkett were said to have been upset by the tactics of the Government whips' office to rig the election on the NEC for MPs and MEPs by issuing its own preferred list of three candidates, including Clive Soley, chairman of the PLP.

Mr Skinner, MP for Bolsover, had gained more than 50 nominations yesterday within 24 hours of deciding to stand again for the NEC. Pete Williams, a well-known figure on the left of the party, had the backing of 27 constituencies, and Liz Davies, had 25. Michael Cashman, received 21 nominations. Last night some party sources said leadership interference had backfired. "The leadership has been back-handed over this," one senior party figure said. "If they had left it to the grass roots to decide, their candidates would have come through."



A crane yesterday lifts one of the carriages from the ICE train which crashed in Germany on Wednesday, killing almost 100 people

Germany halts all high-speed trains

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

GERMAN federal rail officials last night announced they were taking out of service its first-generation high-speed trains for inspections as a precaution after a deadly train crash in northern Germany.

A spokesman said all 60 Inter City Express trains were being pulled immediately. The train that careened out of control on Wednesday morning in the northern German town of

Eschede was part of the fleet of first-generation ICE trains that began operation in 1991.

Officials are still at a loss to explain what caused the train to crash, derailling and slamming into a concrete overpass, killing at least 100 people.

However, it emerged yesterday that some of the carriages on the train came off the track and were dragged for miles before plunging into the road bridge.

Regional government officials confirmed federal railway

experts had found evidence that one of the coaches slipped off the track four miles before the train reached the bridge.

It appears the carriage was dragged along the rail bed until the train went over points shortly before the road crossing at Eschede. The wheels then jumped the track and uncoupled the car from the train.

This might explain why the engine cab found itself free of its passenger load - and how the driver escaped unscathed from the crash.

Industry observers pointed out that survivors of the crash remembered hearing a jolt minutes before the carriages crumpled in the ensuing impact.

"These trains travel at hundreds of miles an hour, so you cover miles in minutes. The noise people apparently heard could have been wheels coming off the track," said Mel Holley, deputy editor of Rail magazine.

The theory the Inter City Express (ICE) jumped off the tracks after hitting a car, which had crashed through the railings

on the bridge and plunged into the path of the high-speed service has already been discounted. This is in part because of the ICE's safety system can detect objects on the track and brake as necessary.

In a burst of national pride *Le Parisien*, the French capital's daily, said because the bogies under the carriages on France's TGV train were articulated "like a snake's vertebrae" they would not be crushed like those of a German express train.

Eschede desolation, page 15

Interest rate rise stuns business

By Diane Coyle
and Colin Brown

MILLIONS of home buyers face the threat of higher mortgage costs after the Bank of England raised interest rates yesterday in a move which outraged industry and caught the City by surprise.

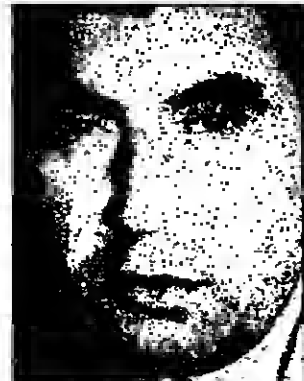
None of the big mortgage lenders increased their loan rates immediately. Stiff competition in the mortgage market meant all were waiting for somebody else to make the first move.

However, costs could yet rise for borrowers who take out variable rather than fixed rate mortgages. An increase of 0.25 per cent would add about £8 a month to the cost of a typical £50,000 repayment mortgage.

The decision by the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee to increase rates by a quarter point to 7.5 per cent was the sixth such move since the election. It stunned the City, unions and businesses, and was greeted with a chorus of condemnation, although the Treasury hinted at its approval.

"This reinforces the consistent message the Chancellor has made in recent months that everyone must show greater responsibility in pay," said a Treasury source.

The Bank of England which has set interest rates since last May showed it was not afraid to take unpopular decisions, and after the Prime Minister's warning that private sector pay rises were too high, Downing Street said the move was absolutely



Gordon Brown has set the tone on interest rates

right. Everything must be done to end the cycle of boom and bust, said the Prime Minister's spokesman. But the Tories were quick to exploit the rise. Tory central office urged Tory MPs

at lunchtime with the message that the rise in interest rates "is another blow to households". Francis Maude, the shadow Chancellor, blamed the Chancellor for the "hammer blow" to homeowners and businesses. He said it was a "direct result of the Government's inability to control inflation" and threatened to put more people out of work.

John Redwood, the Tory Trade and Industry spokesman, warned that interest rates may have to rise further to squeeze inflation out of the economy. "Wages are very buoyant - that is why the Bank was forced to act but we would not have started from here. We would be encouraging savings, not taxing them like the Chancellor."

The Liberal Democrats said

the Bank of England was forced into action because of Gordon Brown's unwillingness to turn the screw on consumers. "Gordon Brown's botched budgets have helped create a Jekyll and Hyde economy - a 'booming' consumer sector and 'hustling' manufacturing," said Edward Davey, the Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman.

The Confederation of British Industry said it was "very concerned", and the Engineering Employers' Federation described its members as "horrified". Exporters blame the strong pound, which has hammered their profits and order books, on high interest rates. Union leaders were equally appalled. Ken Jackson, of the AEEU, warned that 200,000 jobs were under threat

in manufacturing. Banks and building societies said the surprise blow would not help the housing market, coming as it did on top of the recent reduction in tax relief on mortgage interest payments.

Savers started to benefit yesterday, however. The Bradford & Bingley, raised the rates it pays on savings accounts and pledged to hold home loan rates unchanged until 1 August.

Signs the economy is slowing to a more sustainable rate of growth had persuaded the financial markets that the cost of borrowing had already reached its peak and would soon start to fall. But the Bank's statement warned that the uncertain economic outlook kept monetary policy "finely balanced".

Business shock, page 22

Apology Abbey National

We ran an advertisement for Abbey National on the front page of yesterday's edition which should have been withdrawn given the nature of our main front-page story. We apologise for any distress caused.



Barry takes the Sky shilling. And why not?

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

AFTER 26 years as the voice of film on the BBC, Barry Norman will utter his last "...and why not?" for the corporation later this month before he defects to Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV.

Mr Norman's *Film 98* will end this summer and he will front Sky's movie programming from September.

The BBC does not expect *Film 98* to return in the autumn and has dusted down its casting couch to find a presenter for a

new film review show. Names understood to be in the frame include Channel 5 news anchor Kirsty Young, *Big Breakfast* and *Moviewatch* host Johnny Vaughan and comedians Dawn French and Mark Lamarr.

BBC insiders suggested yesterday that though his sudden announcement was a surprise, the 64-year-old presenter had been aware that *Film 98* was unlikely to survive past *Film 99*, let alone reach *Film 2000*.

A source said: "It is time for a change. The feeling is that the show will have to be revamped."

BBC1 controller Peter Salmon said yesterday: "Films are of great interest, particularly to the young, and it is important for us to find popular TV's new face of film who will appeal to them and take us into the new millennium."

The front man of film since he took over *Film 72* eight months after the programme's launch, Mr Norman said: "I will look back on my time at the BBC with huge affection, but the opportunities offered by Sky proved too attractive to turn down."



In brief

Grave secret

The motive for the murder of Billie-Jo Jenkins may be a secret she took "to her grave", a court was told. Page 5

Diana's death

Almost all the witnesses of the accident that killed Diana, Princess of Wales, will gather in one room today. Page 11

Teenage grants

Child benefit for 16- to 19-year-olds should be replaced with £40-a-week grants for sixth formers, MPs said. Page 7

Afghan earthquake

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Foster father's frustrating day 'led to murder'

A DEPUTY headteacher "savagely" beat his teenage foster daughter to death after a day of "frustrating and irritating" events, a court was told yesterday.

Sion Jenkins, 40, bludgeoned 13-year-old Billie-Jo Jenkins to death with an 18-inch metal tent spike on the patio of the family home in Hastings, East Sussex, a jury at Lewes Crown Court heard.

Two of his natural daughters, aged 10 and 12, were outside the family house as Jenkins bludgeoned Billie-Jo and then left the house with his foster daughter dying in a pool of blood.

Mr Jenkins denies murdering Billie-Jo on 15 February last year. But, said Camden Pratt, prosecuting, forensic evidence proved that the teacher had to have been with Billie-Jo when she was beaten.

Mr Pratt said: "There were no witnesses to her death. They (the scientists) will say that when the defendant's clothing was examined, upon it were splatters of blood. When they were tested with DNA tests they turned out to be the blood of Billie-Jo. The pattern of splatters is consistent with the defendant having stood very close to Billie-Jo when she was being struck. It is not consistent with his attending to a dead, blood-stained body."

Mr Pratt added: "The defendant denies being present when she was struck. In view of that blood splattering the Crown says he must have been lying and the only reason he would be lying would be because he was the one who inflicted those fatal blows that led to the splattering of blood on his clothing."

Billie-Jo had been fostered by Mr Jenkins and his wife Lois, 39, for more than four years.

The family had recently moved from London to Hastings, with Billie-Jo and their four natural daughters where. Mr Jenkins had taken up the post of deputy headteacher of William Parker Boys School.

Mr Pratt told the court how on the day of the murder Mr Jenkins had spent much of the day making frustrating journeys picking up his children.

At midday, he had to drive to a supermarket to take a cheque book to his wife. When he arrived he realised he had brought the wrong book and had to make another round trip.

At 2pm, his 10-year-old daughter Lottie was taken to a music lesson by a family friend. But Mr Jenkins and his wife had to follow in their car because he did not know where to pick his daughter up from.



Sion Jenkins: 'Blood stains'

When he went to pick up Lottie, accompanied by his 12-year-old daughter Annie, at around 3pm he had to take another 10-year-old girl home.

On returning home, Mr Jenkins is alleged to have murdered his foster daughter while his children were outside.

Billie-Jo had been left painting the dining room patio doors.

Mr Pratt said: "The defendant says that at one point he had to tell off Billie-Jo for painting the inside of the doors rather than the outside - perhaps another frustration that she wasn't doing what he wanted."

Billie-Jo was still painting

the patio doors. Mr Pratt said:

"The defendant says that he was aware of a brief exchange of words or greeting between Annie and Billie-Jo but he never saw her. He says nothing was amiss. They can have been in the house for only a matter of minutes before they left again."

"The defendant says that the two children left the house and he followed behind, locking the front door and leaving Billie-Jo painting."

After the attack, Mr Jenkins bundled the two girls into his car on the pretext of going to a local DIY store.

"When they arrived home Billie-Jo had been dead for no more than 15 minutes so the scene that was to meet them was horrific," said Mr Pratt.

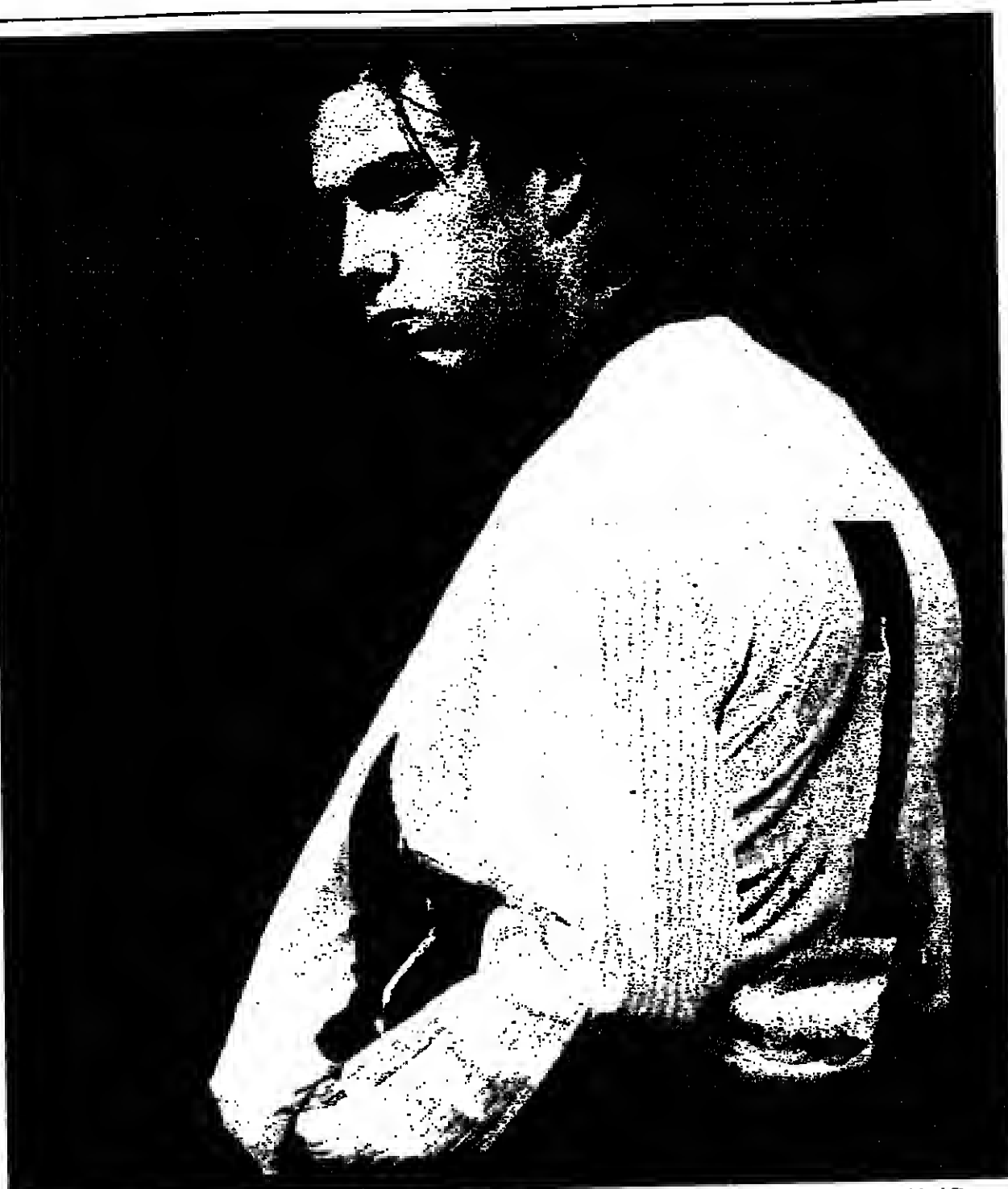
Instead of rushing to help his foster daughter, Mr Jenkins took the girls into the playroom next door and shut the door to the dining room where Billie-Jo lay.

Mr Pratt said: "The Crown says that the defendant didn't go to help. The Crown would suggest that that is because he knew that Billie-Jo was beyond help because it was he that had killed her."

Mr Jenkins rang for an ambulance and telephoned family friend Denise Franklin and asked her to come to the house. He told the operator that Billie-Jo had been injured between 30 and 45 minutes earlier.

Mr Pratt said: "That was a great exaggeration. The longer the time he could give the easier it would be to suggest that a complete stranger for no reason at all had walked in off the street, perpetrated a murder with no motive, having arrived without a murder weapon and left without stealing anything or doing anything, not seen by anyone."

The jury was told the blows suffered by Billie-Jo had been so ferocious that they shattered the left side of her skull. The trial was adjourned until today.



England footballer David Beckham sports the official team shirt

England players' sunburn risk despite shirts

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

ENGLAND'S world cup football squad face a threat from an unexpected quarter when they line up for their opening match in Marseille next week. Glenn Hoddle's advisers appear to have neglected a crucial difference between Wembley and southern France - the Mediterranean sun.

Three doctors who tested a T-shirt made of identical material to that used for the England team's kit found it offered little protection against ultraviolet radiation. In the strong sun normal for France in June and July they warn that the players are at risk of sunburn.

Dr Andrew Wright and colleagues from St Luke's Hospital in Bradford shone ultraviolet rays through a layer

of the material used in the shirt. They found the loose weave of the shirt allowed 10 to 20 per cent of the radiation through.

Over a three-hour period, a fair-skinned person wearing the shirt would be at greater risk of contracting a sore back and shoulders than one who discarded the shirt and applied sunblock of factor 20-30 instead, they say.

The investigators, who report their findings in a letter to *The Lancet*, suggest that moisture from humidity or sweat can reduce the sun protection factor further.

Umbro marketing director Peter Draper said: "This is essentially the same kit used by Brazil when they won the World Cup in Los Angeles in mid-July, 1994. It didn't affect them adversely in any way."

Lawrence murder review 'flawed'

A POLICE officer yesterday admitted there were "inaccuracies and omissions" in an internal review he carried out into the police inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence which was later judged to be crucial in hampering subsequent inquiries.

Detective Chief Superintendent Roderick Barker concluded in his 1993 report that the inquiry was being conducted professionally and all lines of inquiry had been pursued.

But yesterday he told the public inquiry into the black 18-year-old's murder in Eltham, south London, in April 1993, that he had seen mistakes at the time but had not included them for fears that they could be seized upon by defence lawyers acting in a future prosecution. He denied suggestions that his review was a cover-up to protect officers.

His review was criticised by a Police Complaints Authority report by Kent Police last year which said it did not identify errors in the investigation and, as a result, later attempts to solve the crime were misinformed.

Mr Barker, who has now retired from the force, was appointed to conduct the internal review, routinely carried out when murders have not been solved after 10 weeks, four months after the murder.

At the outset he discussed the matter with Commander Hugh Blenkin, who was in charge of operational matters in Eltham in 1993. In his statement to the public inquiry he said that Mr Blenkin had told him that the review should be carried out sensitively and should not criticise any officers, particularly Detective Superintendent Brian Weeden, who was then the senior investigating officer.

Mr Barker said: "It was intended to be a constructive exercise to identify and assist the investigation in moving forward. The sole objective was to identify and bring to justice the people who murdered Stephen Lawrence."

The hearing was adjourned until Monday.

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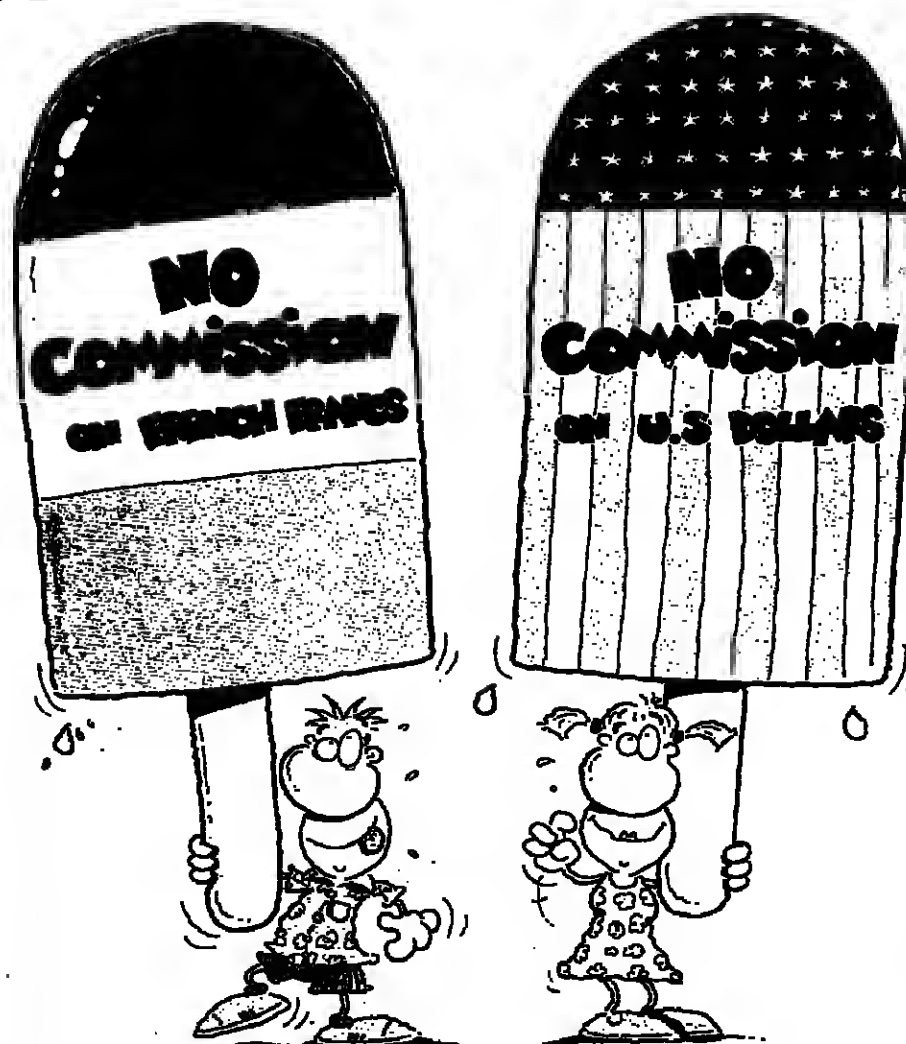
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Pensions poverty faced by millions

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

MILLIONS of people could face a drop of up to 30 per cent in their income after they retire unless pensions provision is improved, the Government was warned yesterday in an independent report.

The report provided more ammunition for the Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, who has been at the centre of a battle with the Treasury over a Green Paper setting out the Government's long-term plans for "stakeholder" pensions to top up the existing state pension.

Launching the report, by a committee chaired by pensions consultant Tom Ross, Ms Harman denied the Treasury had forced the Green Paper to be delayed and insisted that it would be published before the end of the year.

"The report sounds a clear warning that many people now working, perhaps in their thirties or forties, face a big drop in their income when they come to retire," she said. "On average, people can expect their incomes to fall by between 20 and 30 per cent in retirement."

"This report shows that more people will face a bigger drop in their income when they retire - a drop they certainly don't expect to face and one which is avoidable."

Ms Harman will also use the report's findings to reject demands by pensioners campaigners for the state pension to be linked in future to rises in earnings, as well as prices. It found that it would lead to some elderly people living alone losing income support.

But the report endorses the main thrust of Government policy to top up the state pen-

sion with "stakeholder" pensions. Ministers hinted yesterday that they will avoid making the contributions compulsory, but they did not rule out a form of means testing of the state pension in the future, although the manifesto pledge ruling out means testing will last until the next election.

One of the key findings of the panel was that fears of a "pensions time bomb" - with today's children being unable to afford the tax-based state pension for the future - were unfounded.

The report also criticised the Government for failing to make a coherent approach across Whitehall towards pensions, but Mr Ross denied it was intended as a personal attack on ministers, following reports of clashes between Ms Harman and her deputy, Frank Field. Compulsory pensions, page 26



Harriet Harman warned of a big cut in income when people retired. Photograph: Brian Harris

SKETCH

Arrogant Jack in the land of milk and honey

By Michael Brown

THE full scale of the changed circumstances of the Commons, since I was unceremoniously dismissed by the voters of Cleethorpes last year, finally struck home yesterday during agriculture questions when I saw a Labour MP (Rudi Vis) representing the London constituency of Finchley asking a question on agriculture.

I only ever record the member for Finchley being a fearsome Conservative lady who answered questions as Prime Minister.

This alone reminded me that where once sat tired, middle-aged Conservative ministers ruling complacently and arrogantly, there now sit ... well ... tired, middle-aged Labour ministers ruling complacently and arrogantly.

And they do not come more complacent than Jack Cunningham, the Minister for Agriculture, who was on parade yesterday.

He is a long serving, decent, moderate, old-Labour, middle-aged cove for whom complacency is an art form.

With a little effort he is also making satisfactory progress in the arrogance stakes. Not quite rivaling the Lord Chancellor he has, nevertheless, already spent a small fortune of public money on a new, grand, departmental office and banned beef on the bone while leaving his junior minister, Jeff Rooker, to take the rap in a rowdy Commons debate while he had a quick snifter in the members smoking room.

His opposite number on the Tory side, Michael Jack, a former middle-ranking agriculture minister who knows the technicalities of the subject well, challenged the department on its arrogance and complacency.

Those of us who have ever represented agricultural constituencies rarely know anything about the subject when we are first elected but learn to cover our farmyard tracks by mastering the mass of technical jargon: green pound; devaluation; monetary compensatory amounts;

sheepmeat regimes; beef cull and so on.

Yesterday, the terminology frankly overwhelmed my powers of concentration. I started with a yolk when I asked Thuhig (Labour, Islington) quizzed Jeff Rooker about something called the "cattle traceability scheme". Thinking this was some novel way to catch Daisy or Buttercup if they escaped down the lane, it turns out that this is some complicated paraphernalia to do with bovine spongiform encephalopathy and the beef ban.

The air was thick with technicalities. Nigel Daird (Labour, Bexleyheath and Crayford) was concerned about the Varroa Jacobsoni mite which is killing all our bees. He was reassured that in this Blairite land of milk and honey there is a "viable UK honey programme".

Michael Jack and junior minister Elliot Morley got in a convoluted exchange about agri-monetary compensation while Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Conservative, Cotswold) was in a stew about vitamin B6. I could not tell whether this was good for you or not.

Gordon Prentice (Labour, Pendle) was concerned about low-level antibiotics as a prophylactic and predicted biological Armageddon.

Few members attend agriculture question time except those who want a comfortable favourite ringside seat - Dennis Skinner (Labour, Bolsover) and Edward Leigh (Conservative, Gainsborough); those who wanted to rest their eyes - Peter Pike (Labour, Burnley); and those unfortunate to have signed a question form two weeks earlier in the members' tea room when it was thrust under their nose by an energetic whip.

There is only one rule in agriculture questions, any member need to remember: farmers are always grumbling. Never believe them. Ministers' heads are always on the block in the eyes of the National Farmers' Union. They complained throughout the Tory rule; they will complain throughout Labour's rule.

Thus it was, as oow, and shall be ever more.

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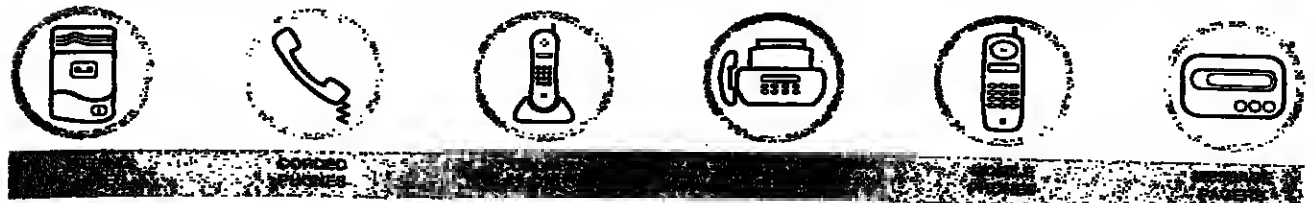
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Two killed as pit roof collapses on miners

TWO MINERS were killed yesterday when the roof of a coal seam collapsed on top of them.

Investigators were last night trying to discover what caused the cave-in at the small, family-owned Moorside Colliery at Eckington, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire — a tragedy that stunned the close-knit community.

Alan Hill, 50, of Poolbrook, and David Martin, 48, of Woodthorpe, both in the nearby town of Staveley, were certified dead at the scene after being dug out by the Mines Rescue Service. It took rescuers two hours to pull them from the debris after the roof collapsed at 6.45am, 800m along a shaft, 38m underground.

The mine has been shut and it is not known when work will start again.

Friends said that Mr Martin had worked at the pit for only a few months. His wife, Jean, was comforted by the couple's 14-year-old son Darrell and other members of the family.

Dennis Martin, a neighbour from Bridle Road, Woodthorpe, said the village was stunned by the news. "I couldn't believe it when I heard what had happened. He was a nice friendly family man who always said hello to you when you passed him in the street," he said.

Mr Hill, of the Square, Poolbrook, leaves a widow, Brenda, and three children, Alan, Maureen and Elaine. "The first we knew about the ac-

cident was when the police knocked on our door," said Maureen. "We're all devastated."

Bob Stevenson, a mine inspector with the Health and Safety Executive, said the pit opened in 1993 and had a good safety record. These were the first fatalities.

He said: "It has 22 employees from local villages. The workforce are in a terrible state. I would expect it may be several days, maybe weeks, before they start working again."

A third miner involved in the accident, but not seriously hurt, was still too shocked to talk to inspectors, he said.

"Mine investigations will take one or two days. They are subject to witnesses and there is one main witness, but he is in a terrible state. It is down to when he will be available to give a statement."

"The pit has a good safety record, with only relatively normal, minor incidents before this happened," said Mr Stevenson.

The miners were repairing a steel roof in the drift mine, which had subsided, when it collapsed on top of them.

No one at the mine was available for comment, but a worker said managers were "very upset".

A Derbyshire Police spokeswoman said: "There is no suggestion as to what happened."

"There seems to have been some sort of earth slide, but what caused that is yet to be discovered."



Moorside Colliery, in Derbyshire, where two miners were killed when a shaft roof caved in. Photograph: Sharon Doorbar

Pay sixth-formers to study, say MPs

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

CHILD benefit for 16 to 19-year-olds should be abolished and replaced with universal £40-a-week grants for sixth formers, an influential committee of back-bench MPs said yesterday.

The Commons Education Select Committee said young people in further education had as much right to support as university students.

Their proposals, published yesterday, would mean axing the £37-£61 a month child benefit parents can claim for 16 to 19-year-olds in full-time education. The system of discretionary grants awarded by local authorities would also go.

Instead all sixth-form students studying full-time at school or college would get a grant, possibly worth £30 or £40 a week, to encourage more people to stay on in education.

MPs also urged ministers to set up university-style means-tested loans for all full-time stu-

dents in further education. At the launch of the committee's report into further education yesterday the chairman, Margaret Hodge, said: "It is not acceptable that the quality of support varies depending on which are the student lives. Nor is it fair that further education students get a raw deal compared to undergraduates."

Mrs Hodge said scrapping child benefit for the over-16s would save £600m a year, while reforming local authority discretionary grants would free another £300m; enough to fund about half the £2bn annual cost of the grants scheme. The rest could come from means-tested loans, she said.

MPs recommended that the grants should be paid directly to teenagers. Mrs Hodge said the proposals were not "over-generous", but direct payments would provide a real incentive to learn. "Where the Government should be putting its money is into supporting the tail-end of under-achievement," she said.

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IN BRIEF

Car drags teenager along road

A MOTHER appealed for help yesterday to catch a driver who left her son with serious injuries following a road rage incident at Farnborough, Hampshire.

Russell Ashwood, 18, was dragged for hundreds of yards by a Ford Fiesta and thrown against another vehicle. Yesterday he was said to be poorly but stable in hospital after being admitted with multiple fractures to his pelvis and internal injuries. His mother Susan, 44, appealed for anyone who could help to contact police: "Someone knows a Fiesta driver came home and something wasn't right, or someone knows who did it."

Police said the incident happened on Wednesday afternoon when the teenager was being driven by his 47-year-old father, Vivian, when they turned left into Sand Hill. A silver Ford Fiesta XR2 — believed to be driven by a man with two passengers in it — stopped in front of them. Police said the teenager got out of the Mini and approached the passenger side of the Fiesta and, after an "exchange of words" through the window, the Fiesta suddenly drove off with him clinging to the side.

Paedophile's sentence cut

A JESUIT priest who sexually abused boys at a Roman Catholic public school had his five-year jail sentence cut to three years yesterday when the Court of Appeal in London quashed his conviction on some of the charges against him.

Last September Father James Channing-Pearce admitted indecently assaulting three boys aged 15, 13 and 12 at Stonyhurst College, near Preston, Lancashire, but denied four charges of molesting another boy aged 16. Children's charities have condemned the decision of the Jesuit organisation that runs the school to fund Channing-Pearce's appeal.

Policeman on drugs charge

A POLICE officer appeared in court yesterday on drugs and conspiracy charges. Andrew Neil Haigh, 35, a constable with the West Yorkshire force, went before Halifax magistrates charged with possessing amphetamines with intent to supply and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

No pleas were entered and Mr Haigh, of Dewsbury, was remanded in police custody until 8 June. He appeared in court with two other men, Gary Sutherland, 30, of Dewsbury, and John Dean Hall, 28, of Batley.

Car safety report wrong

FOUR CAR firms yesterday received an apology from the Consumers' Association over an incorrect report on the risk of injury in a crash. The association indicated last week that the Daewoo Lanos, Honda Civic, Hyundai Accent and Suzuki Baleno posed an unacceptably high risk of serious injury to drivers or passengers. But in a statement, the CA said that the interpretation of its information was incorrect and apologised for the "confusion" it had caused.

Fears over bombs on shore

THE IRISH government expressed "serious concern" to Britain last night as more Second World War bombs were washed ashore from the Irish Sea. A total of 14 devices had been found on beaches on Ireland's eastern coastline over the past 24 hours. The bombs are thought to have been shaken free by storms from the Irish Sea channel where munitions had been dumped.

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Soldiers practising firefighting techniques at Wattisham barracks in Suffolk yesterday, in preparation for next week's planned strike by Essex fire teams. Photograph: Brian Harris

Soldiers haul out Green Goddess hoses for firefighters' strike

THE old girls are not quite as fleet of foot as they used to be. If truth be told, they were always a touch ungainly and built for comfort rather than speed, writes Barrie Clement. But next week the Green

Goddess fire engines, despite their inadequacies, will be cantering around Essex at 40mph in place of the county's striking firefighters.

Yesterday, soldiers of the Royal Scots and Royal Logistic Corps were training on the 50-year-old fire engines in preparation for their emergency duties.

A four-hour stoppage starting at 10am on Monday is expected to be followed by a 24-hour walk-out next Friday, when Essex Fire Brigades Union members will demonstrate their anger over £1m worth of cuts in a march through Colchester.

Some of the soldiers training on the Green Goddesses yesterday at Wattisham military airfield in Suffolk have never been near a fire appliance before. Some will be attending emergency calls with just one day's training.

Andy Gilchrist, an official of the firefighters' union, said that the soldiers' equipment was "totally inadequate". He said: "The soldiers have my sympathy and so does the public."

UK leaps up world economic rankings

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE UK has leapt up the world economic league table in the past year, climbing to within a whisker of the United States, according to a controversial annual assessment.

Despite the Government's newly-launched drive to improve national competitiveness following a damning assessment by management consultancy McKinsey, Britain is the only big European economy to feature anywhere near the top of the world rankings published yesterday.

These are compiled each year by the World Economic Forum, the body which organises the annual get-together of influential business and political leaders in Davos.

The UK is now the fourth most competitive country after Singapore, Hong Kong and the US, it says, up from seventh place last year, after overtaking Canada, New Zealand and Switzerland.

Other gainers this year are the Netherlands, Ireland, Finland and Denmark. But other Asian economies have slipped while the big Continental countries continue to languish in the middle of the league.

In an analysis of the results Jeffrey Sachs, an eminent Harvard professor, concludes that two types of country are the most competitive. Top of the league come the small but very open trading economies like Singapore. Close behind are the Anglo-Saxon countries, including the US, UK and Canada.

This pattern is due to the weight the report's rankings place on light regulation and the absence of red tape. Any single measure of competitiveness is bound to reflect the assumptions that have to be made to summarise an economy in one number, and the World Economic Forum is a firm advocate of free-market capitalism.

Thus Britain's leap from 15th to 7th place between 1996 and 1997 was acclaimed by the Conservatives in the run-up to last year's election as a clear vote of confidence in their economic policies. The Labour party, in reply, focused on alternative figures showing dismal growth in the UK's national output per head.

The WEF's overall "competitiveness index" is calculated by averaging a wide range of sub-indices measuring the openness of the economy, employment laws, the quality of government, and the national infrastructure.

The explanation for the UK's ascent in the latest 12 months lies in continuing improvements in infrastructure, government deregulation and labour market "flexibility". The financial system and institutions such as the competition authorities and the judiciary continued to score high marks.

However, in a conclusion that will come as no surprise to exporters, the strength of sterling against overseas currencies counts as a key liability, along with low national savings and investment and weaknesses in technical education.

Singapore and Hong Kong get top billing once again, despite the fact that the Asian economic crisis means both will suffer a sharp slowdown this year. The report admires their minimal governments and openness to international trade and finance.

Premier league top 20 economies		
98 rank	Country	97 rank
1	Singapore	1
2	Hong Kong	2
3	US	3
4	UK	7
5	Canada	5
6	Taiwan	8
7	Netherlands	12
8	Switzerland	6
9	Norway	10
10	Luxembourg	11
11	Japan	13
12	New Zealand	14
13	Australia	17
14	Finland	15
15	Denmark	20
16	Malaysia	19
17	Chile	13
18	Korea	21
19	Ireland	16
20	Austria	27

Source: World Economic Forum

However, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have all fallen in the rankings this year while Korea's position was little changed at number 19.

Most of Asia's former tigers remain ahead of France, Germany and Italy, despite the economic whirlwind that has caused them such upheaval during the past 12 months. The Continentals are marked down heavily for their rigid labour markets and expensive social welfare systems.

Less controversially, at the bottom of the league are Eastern European countries, and other emerging economies such as India and Zimbabwe, where corruption is rife, institutions and infrastructure fragile, and organised crime is often far more efficient than governments. The report once again blames the legacy of socialism. Business outlook, page 23

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**SAVE
£120**

Hitapoint
5.6 GROSS
CUBIC
FOOT
UPRIGHT
FREEZER
• Fast freeze
facility
• High
temperature
storage
Model M2000
was £259.99

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SUMMER SALE

YOU CAN'T BUY BETTER

INTEREST FREE OPTION
OR BUY NOW PAY LATER
ON A WIDE RANGE OF TOP BRAND PRODUCTS

Hotpoint
1000 SPIN WASHING MACHINE
• 1000 spin
• 1100 wash
load
• Fast freeze facility
• Automatic
defrost
Model M2000
was £259.99

6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION
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FOOT
UPRIGHT
FREEZER
• Fast freeze
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• High
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Model M2000
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TOSHIBA 28" HOME CINEMA TV
"Picture quality is particularly good"
WHAT VIDEO & TV MAGAZINE RECOMMENDED
• 60cm visible screen
• Dolby Pro-Logic for Cinema Surround Sound
• Fastest • 3 SCART sockets
Model 2877DB, was £749.99

BUY NOW PAY JUNE 1999
SALE
~~£699.99~~
**SAVE
£50**

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FREEZER
• Fast freeze
facility
• High
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storage
Model M2000
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£120**

PROline
10.4 GROSS CUBIC FOOT FRIDGE FREEZER
• 6.2 cu ft gross fridge capacity
• 4.2 cu ft gross freezer capacity
• Fast freeze facility • Automatic defrost
Model CDB398, was £749.99
previously £899.99

6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION
SALE
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**SAVE
£130**

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UPRIGHT
FREEZER
• Fast freeze
facility
• High
temperature
storage
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was £259.99

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**SAVE
£120**

PORTABLE TV'S & CAMCORDERS

up to 17 now reduced in the Sale

Goodmans 14" REMOTE CONTROL TV
• 14" remote control
• 14" remote control
• 14" remote control
Model 1439RS
was £199.99 previously £219.99

SALE
~~£199.99~~
**SAVE
£20**

Goodmans 14" REMOTE CONTROL TV
• 14" remote control
• 14" remote control
• 14" remote control
Model 1439RS
was £199.99 previously £219.99

SALE
~~£199.99~~
**SAVE
£20**

TV/VIDEO PACKAGES & TV'S

up to 53 now reduced in the Sale

Goodmans 28" WIDE SCREEN
STEREO TV
• 28" wide screen
• 28" wide screen
• 28" wide screen
Model 2877DB
was £749.99 previously £849.99

SALE
~~£749.99~~
**SAVE
£50**

Goodmans 28" WIDE SCREEN
STEREO TV
• 28" wide screen
• 28" wide screen
• 28" wide screen
Model 2877DB
was £749.99 previously £849.99

SALE
~~£749.99~~
**SAVE
£50**

NICAM STEREO VIDEOS

up to 11 now reduced in the Sale

Goodmans NICAM STEREO VIDEO
• 4 recording heads • Programme
Delivery Control • 2 SCART sockets
Model SUE-720L, was £299.99
previously £349.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE
~~£299.99~~
**SAVE
£20**

Goodmans NICAM STEREO VIDEO
• 4 recording heads • Programme
Delivery Control • 2 SCART sockets
Model SUE-720L, was £299.99
previously £349.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE
~~£299.99~~
**SAVE
£20**

CD HI-FI SYSTEMS

up to 20 now reduced in the Sale

VENTURER 3 DISC MULTIMEDIA CD HI-FI
• 3 disc digital tuner
• 3 disc digital tuner
• 3 disc digital tuner
Model CDB232
was £199.99 previously £219.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE
~~£199.99~~
**SAVE
£20**

VENTURER 3 DISC MULTIMEDIA CD HI-FI
• 3 disc digital tuner
• 3 disc digital tuner
• 3 disc digital tuner
Model CDB232
was £199.99 previously £219.99

EXCLUSIVE TO COMET
SALE
~~£199.99~~
**SAVE
£20**

GAMES PACKS & TELEPHONES

wide range now reduced in the Sale

Playstation VALUE PACK
• 4 TOP PARTED GAMES
• Includes console, 2 hand controllers
• Memory card slot • On-Cue
• Action Power Soccer International
• 12 Games • Value! Separate selling
price £274.95 Package was £189.99

SALE
~~£189.99~~
**SAVE
£85**

Playstation VALUE PACK
• 4 TOP PARTED GAMES
• Includes console, 2 hand controllers
• Memory card slot • On-Cue
• Action Power Soccer International
• 12 Games • Value! Separate selling
price £274.95 Package was £189.99

SALE
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**SAVE
£85**

MULTIMEDIA PC'S

up to 8 now reduced in the Sale

Goodmans MULTIMEDIA PC
• Intel 100MHz Pentium
• 32MB CD ROM • 3.2GB hard disk
• 28.8Kbps modem • 15" monitor
• 44100Hz 16bit stereo sound
• 100MB free space
Model M2000, was £199.99
previously £219.99

BUY NOW PAY 4 MONTHS LATER
SALE
~~£199.99~~
**SAVE
£70**

Goodmans MULTIMEDIA PC
• Intel 100MHz Pentium
• 32MB CD ROM • 3.2GB hard disk
• 28.8Kbps modem • 15" monitor
• 44100Hz 16bit stereo sound
• 100MB free space
Model M2000, was £199.99
previously £219.99

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DAILY POEM

Performance

By Les Murray

I starred last night, I shone:
I was footwork and firework in one,

a rocket that wriggled up and shot
darkness with a parol of brilliants
and a peewee descendant on a flung bit;
I was husters of glitter-bombs expanding
to mantle and aurora from a crown,
I was fountains, falls of blazing paint,
para-flares spot-welding cloudy heaven,
loose gold off fierce toeholds of white,
a finale red-tongued as a haka leap:
that too was a butt of all right!

As usual after any triumph, I was
of course inconsolable.

This is our final selection from Les Murray's *Collected Poems*, first published by Carcanet Press (£12.95). Born on a New South Wales farm in 1938, Les Murray has been a full-time writer since 1971; in 1996, he won the T S Eliot Prize. This poem first appeared in *Suburban Redneck Poems* (1996).

We make music
easier to track down.

(centre spread, tabloid section.)

هنا من الأصل



A farmer contemplating the future yesterday on the last day of the cattle market in Banbury, Oxfordshire, once the largest livestock market in Europe

Photograph: Tom Pilton

Videos a force for good, says Disney

THE image of today's young people becoming isolated and unsocial as they sit glued to the television, videos and computer games is wrong, according to entertainment giant Disney.

New research, commissioned by the makers of children's video favourites *Beauty and the Beast* and *Pocahontas*, reassures parents who may use videos as a "baby-sitting" device that they can actually benefit their children.

The report, published today, says the VCR could be taking the place of old-fashioned story tellers and end up making children more, not less, sociable.

About 96 per cent of children in the UK live in homes with videos and despite fears that films are just used by parents to keep children quiet, youngsters could be learning from the right sort of tapes, the report claims.

Disney, makers of nine of the 10 best-selling videos of all time, say that parents have more control over what their children watch on a video than they do over general television - and almost half of Britain's children have a television set in their rooms.

Dr John Richer, a clinical psychologist at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, carried out the study after a MORI poll showed that six in 10 children drew pictures of scenes and characters after watching a film.

Nearly three in four parents from the poll of 300 said their children played a game based on what they had just seen and more than nine out of 10 said their children would remember the songs from the film.

Dr Richer said that all of

these things were skills that children traditionally picked up from adults reading them stories and encouraging "active play".

He said: "If used appropriately, videos can encourage children's understanding of moral issues and social relationships."

"Video watching can reflect the role of the traditional storyteller who introduced children to folk tales, myths and legends of the community and repeat viewing can enhance children's interpretive skills as they are able to absorb themes and plots."

Helen Stratton of Disney Videos said: "We are delighted that this new research confirms what our young audience has been telling us for years."

But other academics who have carried out their own research into the field say that like anything in life, television and videos can be a force for good, but are also open to misuse.

Professor Barrie Gunter, social psychologist at the University of Wales, is author of a report which says that children who watch television for more than four hours a day are more prone to rebellion, drug-taking, crime and failure at school.

Dr Gunter said: "The research that we have done shows some consensus that children who become teletaddicts are associated with a range of circumstances that one would call anti-social."

"I do accept that television and videos can be useful if the circumstances are right, but they can also be associated with more detrimental effects on youngsters."

Law sought for children's privacy on Internet

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

A US government agency has called for legislation to protect the privacy of children using the Internet, following a survey which showed widespread soliciting of personal data, including from juveniles, with no assurances about how it would be used.

The agency, the Federal Trade Commission, is still considering whether to recommend statutory safeguards to

replace self-regulation where adults are concerned.

The FTC report, published yesterday, was commissioned by an attempt to gauge the success of voluntary self-regulation by companies advertising on the Internet. The findings, described by the FTC Chairman, Robert Pitofsky, as "disappointing", could herald the end of the Clinton administration's generally hands-off approach to Internet regulation. Stronger words came from privacy campaigners,

one of whom, Jeff Chester of the Center for Media Education in Washington, called the report "a major indictment of the lack of privacy on-line".

Of 1,400 commercial Internet sites surveyed, the FTC found that only 14 per cent gave any indication of how the personal information they collected would be used, let alone any guarantee that the information would not be passed to third parties. The report cited several companies operating "chat-rooms" for children, which

requested full name, address, e-mail address and hobbies. The information would allow them to be easily tracked and targeted by advertisers.

Last July, in its first policy pronouncement on Internet privacy, the Clinton administration recommended that commercial concerns possessing websites should disclose how personal data would be used and whether it could be passed on. Introducing the report yesterday, Mr Pitofsky said that while some big companies like

IBM and America Online were following these guidelines, the policy of voluntary policing "is not working".

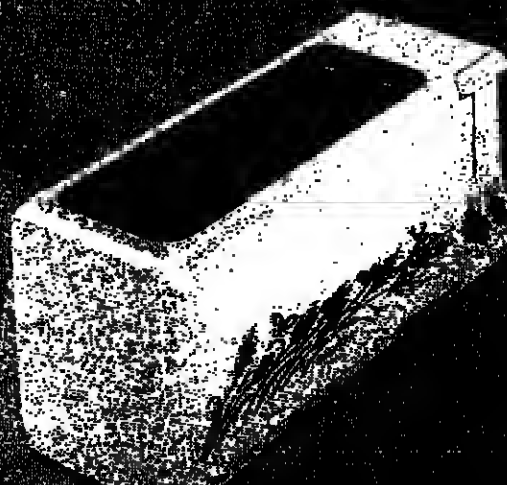
In the first instance, the FTC wants a law that would require companies to ensure that a child under 12 had an adult's permission before disclosing personal details. Recognising the ease with which children could falsify their age or fabricate a confirmatory e-mail from a parent, Mr Pitofsky said that this would none the less be preferable to the current situation where companies

could effectively operate like "door-to-door salesmen", luring waifs to children who were "home alone" and unsupervised.

The survey confirmed the fears of many Americans over lack of on-line privacy, but it is the Internet itself which people find most threatening. This is not only because of the sophistication of data collecting and sorting techniques, but because the Internet allows companies to track not only what people buy, but what they considered buying and rejected.

Cardholders must be aged 18 or over. Applications are subject to status. Withdrawal quotations available on request. For Purchases and Balance Transfers, interest will be charged on a daily basis at the standard rate of 1.38% per month 17.9% APR (variable). 19.7% APR (variable) for cash advances. In calculating the APR we have not taken into account the effect of any Money Back which may be paid in respect of Eligible Interest under the Scheme Rules. "Special Promotion Balance Transfer Rate of 12.9% APR (fixed) or 15.9% APR (fixed) if other account closed at the same time. Interest will be charged from the date the transfer reaches the account. Conditions and restrictions apply to both the Money Back Scheme, the Money Back Partners and the Introductory Rate of Balance Transfers. Full details available on request and are included in the application pack. Within 25 days of the date of your monthly statement, you must repay at least 3% of the amount outstanding (£5 minimum). The standard Money Back on purchases is 0.5% up to £2,999.99 and 1% above. Purchases for business or trade purposes are not eligible. Double Money Back will be awarded for every purchase when you shop in any of our selected Money Back partners. Money Back Partner conditions apply. Full details will be provided before you receive your card and will be available on request. You will receive Money Back on any eligible interest you pay. Eligible interest is 9% of the interest debited to your account. Handling charge of 1.5% (£2 minimum) payable on cash advances and credit card cheques (other than promotional ones). For security and training purposes telephone calls will be recorded as monitored. Correct as at 2/5/98.

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State subsidy boosts private toll road

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

BRITAIN's first private toll road will benefit from a £20m subsidy on a nearby link road despite promises that it would not cost taxpayers a penny.

The Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) will run for 27 miles and link the southern and northern ends of the M6. Its supporters say it will reduce congestion on the motorways around Birmingham, but environmentalists believe the BNRR will generate rather than reduce traffic.

The government subsidy for "the reconstruction of the existing M42 near Water Orton to enable its use by BNRR traffic" was revealed in a parliamentary answer by the transport minister Glenda Jackson to the Labour MP Tony Wright.

However, environmentalists claim that, while in opposition, Labour said the BNRR would not be built.

"The Government has mis-

led people into believing this was an entirely privately funded project," said Gerald Kells, of Friends of the Earth. "Labour, who promised in opposition never to build the road, have this hidden subsidy."

Labour's own roads review document lists the BNRR as a "private" project, and the Highway Agency told a public inquiry that it fitted with Government policy of "harnessing private finance to bring forward badly needed infrastructure".

Ministers gave the go-ahead for the £370m BNRR last July. Campaigners suspect that John Prescott, the Secretary of State for Transport, approved the road partly because of a penalty - said to be greater than £30m - that was payable to the private consortium building the dual three-lane motorway if it was cancelled.

The details of the commercial agreement could be revealed if a judge allows the concession to be made public later this year.



Catherine Southon of Sotheby's auctioneers, in London, examining spun glass eyes from a collection of 2,000 orbs which are to be included in a sale of scientific and medical instruments in October

Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

Police face no action over death of asylum seeker

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

TWO police officers will not be prosecuted over the unlawful killing of a Nigerian asylum seeker, the Crown Prosecution Service said yesterday following a fresh review of the case.

The decision not to charge anyone for the death of Shiji Lapite, 34, who died in north London in December 1994, was immediately condemned as "incomprehensible" by the lawyer representing the dead man's family.

The CPS was forced to reconsider its original decision not to prosecute any police officers following a court challenge. But in a statement the CPS said yesterday that there was still insufficient evidence.

In January 1996, an inquest ruled that Mr Lapite was killed unlawfully after one constable admitted kicking him in the head.

Mr Lapite was arrested in Stoke Newington on suspicion of being in possession of crack cocaine. After Mr Lapite was searched and no drugs were found he ran off. Officers caught up with him and a struggle began, with Mr Lapite being put in a neckhold.

Mr Lapite later collapsed in a police van and was driven straight to hospital, where he was pronounced dead from asphyxiation.

The inquest jury heard that one pathologist had counted 45 separate injuries on the dead man's body.

A statement by the CPS said yesterday: "After painstaking consideration the Chief Crown Prosecutor for Central Casework has decided there is insufficient evidence to prosecute any police officer in connection with the death of Mr Lapite."

"In the absence of evidence to show that the actions of the police officers, either singly or in concert, were a substantial cause of Mr Lapite's death, there is not a realistic prospect of conviction against any police

officer for manslaughter." The statement also ruled out other charges relating to injuries sustained by Mr Lapite.

It added that five pathologists involved in the case were consulted again.

"None of them was able to state, without reservation, that compression of the neck was a substantial cause of Mr Lapite's death or that any other act of a police officer caused his death," the statement said.

But Raju Bhatt, the solicitor for Mr Lapite's family, argued: "There was no doubt in the jury's mind that this man had died as a result of an unlawful and dangerous neckhold."

"It's inconceivable that any fair examination could have come to any other conclusion than to prosecute."

It is thought that members of the Lapite family will ask for a judicial review of yesterday's decision. They could also attempt to privately prosecute the officers involved.

The Police Complaints Authority said it would now reconsider whether disciplinary action should be taken against any officers.

The case of Mr Lapite was one of three deaths in custody to be re-considered following a successful court challenge last July in which the CPS admitted making mistakes.

It led to the accusation that the Director of Public Prosecutions, Dame Barbara Mills, and her prosecutors were unwilling to take the police to court.

Following the reviews three Metropolitan Police officers were charged in February with the manslaughter of Richard O'Brien, 37, who died after being arrested in Walworth, south London, in April 1994.

At the same time, the CPS decided not to prosecute anyone over the treatment of John Treadaway, a robbery suspect who claimed he was tortured by West Midlands police officers.

An inquiry into the quality of decision-making by the CPS in such cases has been set up.

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Witnesses to Diana's death meet in Paris

By John Lichfield
in Paris

FOR the first time since the accident which killed Diana, Princess of Wales, almost all of the event's living participants and witnesses will gather in one room today.

The judge leading the official investigation into the crash has called a "general confrontation" of witnesses and suspects - an event eerily reminiscent of the last chapter of an Agatha Christie novel. The only notable absentee will be the sole survivor of the crash, the bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, who has declined to attend.

The participants, behind closed doors in a court-room in the Palais de Justice in Paris, will include Mohamed Al Fayed, father of Diana's companion, Dodi Al Fayed, who also died in the crash. They will also include the nine press photographers, and one press despatch rider, placed under formal examination for their role in the accident.

When first announced two months ago, it seemed the "confrontation" - a commo device in French judicial inquiries - would mark the beginning of the end of the nine months' investigation. According to leaks from the inquiry, this may not now be the case.

Interminable technical investigations of the wreckage of the Mercedes are not yet complete; they may not be ready until October, 14 months after the accident. By bringing all the principal participants together - press photographers, police, a dozen eye-witnesses - Judge Hervé Stéphan hopes to close some of the gaping holes which persist in his re-creation of the events of the night of 30-31 August last year.

How close were the pursuing press motorbikes when the Mercedes carrying Diana's party crashed into the 13th pillar of the underpass? What was actually seen of the white Fiat Uno suspected of having been in a glancing collision with the Mercedes before the accident? How callously did the photographers behave in the minutes after the crash (at least three are known to have taken pictures of the dead and dying victims)?

The hearing is not a trial: it will not point the finger of blame. It will force the witnesses and suspects to test their often conflicting accounts, one against the other, face to face. It will not consider the dozens of conspiracy theories about the crash, propagated, amongst others, by Mr Fayed, British tabloids, French scandal magazines, the Internet and Colonel Gaddafi.

Officially, no information

about the investigation can be revealed or published. But sources close to the inquiry have always insisted that they have discovered no scrap of evidence which suggests that the crash was anything but an accident.

Judicial sources in Paris declined to comment yesterday on the latest revelations by an ITV documentary, and in the *Spectator* magazine, about the driver of the Mercedes, Henri Paul. Both said that tests on Mr Paul's body after the crash revealed that he was driving with an abnormally high level of monoxide poisoning in his blood, as well as mind-calming drugs and three times the legal limit of alcohol.

Despite the length and intensity of the investigation, it appears that Judge Stéphan is not

The known facts of the night's events are these. The driver, Mr Paul, had taken nearly three times the permitted level of alcohol. He had also taken anti-depressant drugs. He was not qualified as a chauffeur and was not licensed to drive that type of car (an armoured limousine).

The only person in the Mercedes to fasten his seat-belt was the bodyguard, Mr Rees-Jones, the only survivor. The car was travelling at high speed just before the crash, probably at 90 to 100mph.

The route was chosen by Dodi and Mr Paul just before the car left the Ritz hotel. It was not the obvious route. The party was returning to Dodi's flat just off the Champs-Élysées, closer to the Ritz than the Place de l'Alma where the crash happened. A detour, along the fast roads beside the river Seine, was chosen by Dodi to try to shake off the paparazzi. Everyone knew that there were other photographers waiting outside the flat.

The facts which are not clear or disputed are as follows. How close were the pursuing bikes when the accident happened? The photographers say they had been left trailing far behind; some eyewitnesses agree; others say that at least one bike was close to the car.

Fragments found at the crash site suggest that the Mercedes may have given a glancing blow to a white Fiat Uno before it crashed. But what happened to the Fiat; both on the night and since?

Exhaustive efforts to trace the car have failed. This is surprising, even disturbing. But does it add up to a conspiracy? Who could possibly have planned to ram the Mercedes at that place, at that time? With a Fiat Uno?

A recent survey showed an 11 per cent increase in road deaths in Paris last year. The survey showed that the most lethal time to drive in Paris is late on Saturday night and in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The most lethal places to drive are the Boulevard Péripérique and the fast roads beside the quays of the Seine. The most common contributing causes for lethal accidents were drink, speed and failure to fasten seat-belts.

The accident in the tunnel below the Place de l'Alma was not a banal late Saturday night Parisian road crash; the identity of the victims and the presence of the pursuing press pack distinguish this crash from any other. Otherwise the night's events fit the classic profile of accidental death on the roads of the French capital.



Mohamed Al Fayed (top) and Judge Hervé Stéphan, who leads the investigation



yet able to say precisely why the Mercedes limousine spun out of control soon after midnight on Sunday 31 August. But the facts which have been established mean that a supreme act of will is necessary to sustain a theory of conspiracy, plot and assassination.

It would have been impossible for any would-be assassin or assassins (leaving aside all question of motive) to know the movements of Diana's party that night; their plans were constantly changing and the final route of the Mercedes was decided by Dodi and Mr Paul minutes before the crash. In any case, Diana would probably be alive today if she had worn her seatbelt.

Exiled orphans call for judicial inquiry

FORMER child migrants, who were deported to Australia without the knowledge of their parents, yesterday called for a judicial inquiry into their treatment by Roman Catholic orphanages.

They claim that they suffered severe mental and physical abuse involving public floggings at the hands of nuns and brothers - and were treated as orphans although their parents were alive in Britain.

Giving evidence to the Commons health select committee, former child migrant John Hennessey broke down in tears as he recalled his childhood in the Christian Brothers orphanage in Perth, Australia.

Mr Hennessey, now 62, was 10 when he was deported. He said he has been frightened and felt inferior ever since.

"As we got to Perth, we all stood in a line and brothers and sisters were separated straight away. I will never forget their screams," he said.

Once, because he was hungry, he stole some grapes from a vineyard and, as punishment,

he had to strip naked in front of 50 other children and suffered a flogging which "nearly killed him".

At the age of 16, many migrants were sent to work on farms and told not to return to the orphanages.

"We had no identity, no birth certificate, nothing. In my years there I did not receive a single cuddle," Mr Hennessey added.

The former child migrants were unable to become Australian citizens because they had no birth certificate.

"They just lied to us about our backgrounds. We had no idea that we might have family in Britain. We believed them because they were priests and brothers and nobody would have ever thought that they would lie to us."

"It is absolutely scandalous what happened to us and while we do not blame this government, this still happened to us - to British flesh and blood. There should be a judicial inquiry to establish how this could happen."

Matthew Dalton, 59, who was deported in 1947, told MPs

how he managed to trace his mother, half-brother and half-sister in 1995.

He said: "When my mother tried to trace me after the war they told her I was lost in evacuation and she accepted it - why wouldn't she believe nuns?"

Mr Dalton said he was in the Sisters of Nazareth orphanage in Swansea at the time and could easily have been found. "There was a blatant cover-up."

Earlier this year, the Sisters of Mercy orphanage in Neekol, northern Queensland, apologised after it emerged that hundreds of children, many of them from Britain, suffered torture and sexual abuse.

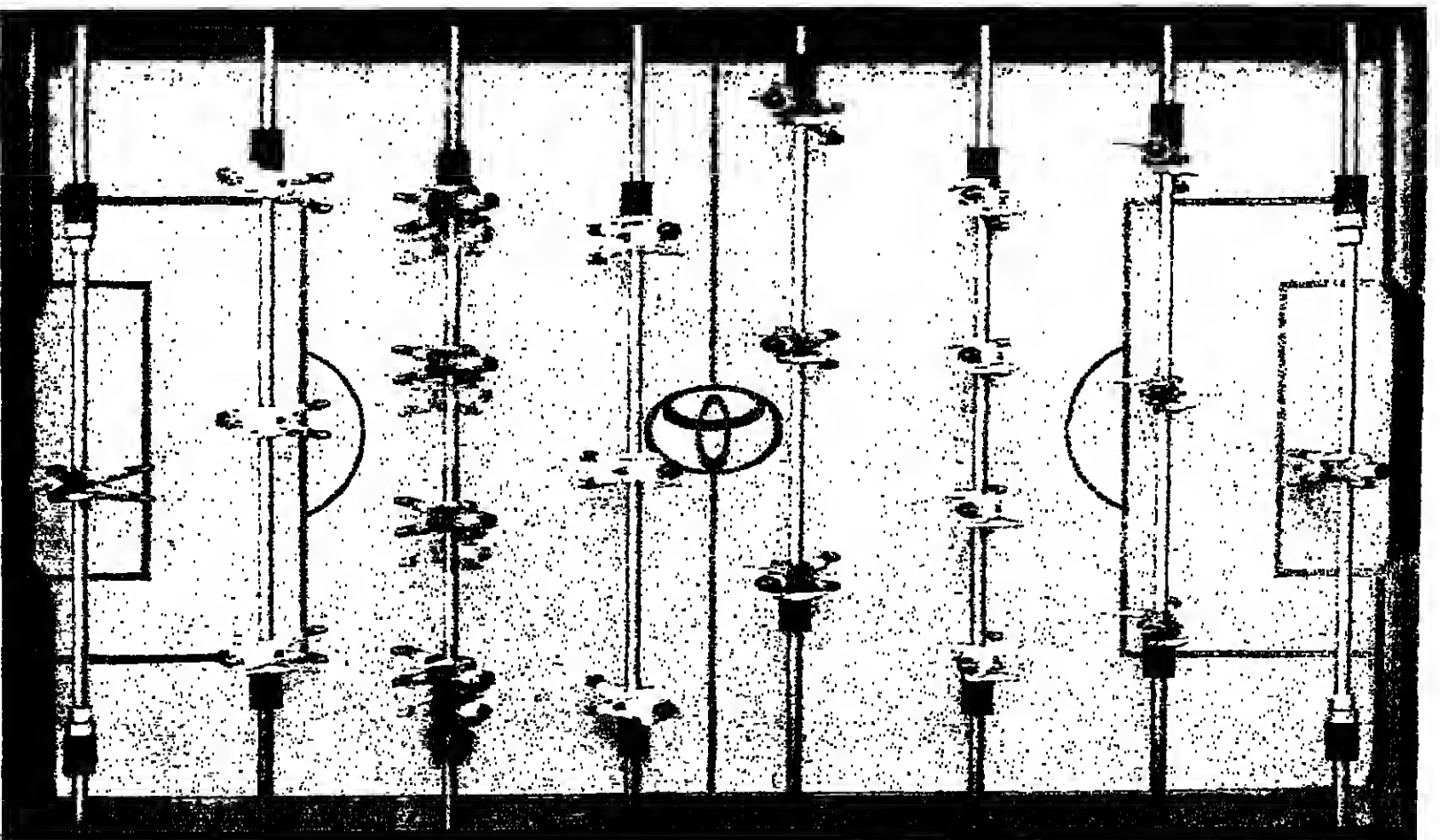
The order, which committed the cruelties over 90 years, is being investigated by the Queensland state government.

The child immigrant scheme, which was mainly organised by the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Nazareth, was a bid to bring "fresh, good white blood" to former colonies. Hundreds of children were shipped to Australia for a "new start" until 1967.



Svetlana Kapanina, 29, the world champion aerobatic pilot, practising in her Sukhoi aircraft above Biggin Hill airfield in Kent for this weekend's International Air Fair. The event will also mark the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Air Force. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

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EUROPE's environmental beach accolade, the European Blue Flag, has been awarded to a record number of beaches in the UK this year, it was announced yesterday.

A total of 45 bathing beaches – 23 in England, 13 in Wales, seven in Northern Ireland and two in Scotland – can measure themselves against the cleanest and safest in Europe, said the Tidy Britain Group, UK organiser of the continent-wide award.

The blue flags are awarded for meeting a series of management objectives, including beach cleanliness, dog control, wheelchair access, provision of facilities and provision of life-saving equipment.

The UK's total has been steadily improving since 1992, when only 17 beaches received blue flags; in 1996 the total was 31, and last year it was 38.

compared with the other 18 countries in the scheme, we are still only middle-ranking in terms of success, being far surpassed by Spain, with 369 blue flags, Italy with 342, Greece with 326 and France with 299.

and Ireland (with 74) surpass us, although we are ahead of Sweden (37 blue flags), Cyprus (25) and Belgium (nine).

Six UK marinas also gained blue flags in the first year that the scheme has been open to

Wales and one in Northern Ireland.

"These results confirm what we have always known - that the UK has some of the best beaches in Europe," said Professor Graham Ashworth, the Tidy

"This is excellent news for tourism in the UK. It is also exciting to see that the environmental lessons learned in the Blue Flag for beaches have now been taken on by marinas, encouraging boat owners to

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Study to offer first full view of global warming

By Michael McCarthy
Environment Correspondent



**Environment Minister,
Michael Meacher**

WILL global warming be good for Essex, one thing weighed against another? We may soon have a shrewd idea. For the full picture of what climate change may do to Britain is to be assembled in what the Government says is the first study of its kind in the world.

The pluses and the minuses of the greenhouse effect — warmer days to sunbathe in, say, but drier soil that hinders crop growth — will be put together with all their various trade-offs so that local authorities, business leaders and other decision makers can plan strategically for the effects of climate change as it starts to impact upon us over the next twenty to thirty years.

The study is to be launched today, World Environment Day, by the Environment Minister, Michael Meacher, and it is the integrated aspect of it which the Government is stressing is new.

Previous research into climate change impacts has been conducted sector by sector – looking at the effects of rising temperatures on agriculture, for instance, or on health, or on the threat to low-lying coasts from sea-level rise which global warming will bring with it. But hitherto there have been no io-



other being the North-West) and now all those possible effects, which have already been considered individually, will be assembled into a larger picture.

The study of the two initial regions is likely to last two to three years and will be carried out by scientists of the UK Climate Impacts Programme based at the Environmental Change Unit at Oxford, under Dr Mervin McKenzie-Hedger.

Government scientists have already indicated, in a report two years ago, that climate change impacts in the UK are likely to be considerable.

For the decades of the 2020s to the 2050s, they said;

■ Average temperatures were likely to rise at a rate of about 0.2 degrees C, and will be nearly a full degree warmer than the average of 1961-1990 by the 2020s, and 1.6 degrees warmer by the 2050s;

- Extremely warm seasons and years are expected to occur more frequently;

■ Sea level is expected to rise by five centimetres per decade.

Harmful effects are likely to include an increase in insect species from the continent, a greater demand and lesser sup-

greater demand and lesser supply of water, a decrease in crop yields in the south and increased damage from more violent storms.

Surgeons need their own league tables

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

SURGEONS have no way of knowing whether they are good or bad at their job compared to others, because too little information is collected on the outcomes of surgery, a senior doctor said yesterday.

James Johnson, the chairman of the British Medical Association's consultants committee, said it was essential that information such as death rates, readmission and re-operation rates was collected to prevent a repeat of the Bristol heart surgery disaster, in which operations on babies were allowed to continue long after it had become clear that too many were dying.

Addressing the BMA's annual conference of consultants, Mr Johnson, a consultant vas-

cular surgeon at Halton General Hospital in Cheshire, said that he could calculate his own mortality rate, but had nothing with which to compare it.

"If I knew that 90 per cent of vascular surgeons in the UK had mortality rates of between 3 and 8 per cent, say, I would be able to see how I was performing compared with my peers."

He said that doctors with poor results could then take action to improve their performance and, where their results were unacceptable, they could be stopped from operating. But in most areas there is no information and no opportunity to compare results.

"Patients find it astonishing that we don't have that data. We have got to get it. But that will mean a huge effort and the Government has got to pay for it."

However, Mr Johnson warned against ranking individual surgeons in league tables of death rates, as is done in the United States.

He said that this could cause them to refuse to operate on risky cases because it might affect their ranking. Instead, an acceptable range should be established and any surgeon who fell within it should be certified; this would indicate that patients could have confidence in them.

"I am a vascular surgeon. If there was pressure on me to improve my ranking in a league table I could refuse surgery to anyone over 75. It already happens in the US. If a patient looks a bit dodgy they have to go out of state [to find a surgeon] because no one wants to operate and risk their place in the league."



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TV agony aunt takes on macho Brazil

By Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

SHE was Brazil's equivalent to the American agony aunt Dr Ruth, shattering taboos with a daily television show which answered the questions of millions of women, many of them illiterate, about sex. Then she went into politics, forming the feminist "Lipstick Lobby" to challenge Brazil's longstanding male dominance of public life.

Even at 53, Marta Suplicy has trouble casting off the sex symbol image which was imposed on her by the many Brazilian men who used to tune into her show. But she has been instrumental in changing the lives of millions of Brazilian women.

The former sexologist is now a member of parliament for the left-wing Workers' Party, which has been down on its luck during recent years but is attempting a comeback with the help of women candidates. Soon she is likely to run for governor of the nation's most powerful state, Sao Paulo. She may have little chance of winning but she is bound to strike further blows against Brazil's traditional machismo during her campaign.

Ms Suplicy predicts that Brazil will have its first woman president within the next eight years. Given her party's humble recent fortunes, she is too realistic to say it will be her. But if she is right, it will be in no small part due to her efforts.



Marta Suplicy in action. The Workers' Party MP is running for governorship of Sao Paulo, Brazil's most powerful state

Photograph: Ricardo Stuckert

She comes from one of Sao Paulo's high-society families and, as a fashion trendsetter known for her French designer suits, she at first seemed an odd choice to represent the down-trodden in a country with possibly the biggest gap between rich and poor in the world.

But her daily television show, in which she shocked

the Catholic establishment and was billed as "a loose woman" by discussing such things as anal sex, put her into the homes of many of the 80 million or more women in Brazil, who make up 52 per cent of the population. And that meant votes.

When she started her television programme in the early Eighties, men still had the con-

situtional right to prohibit their wives from going out to work. That clause was scrapped only in 1988.

After being elected to parliament, Ms Suplicy pushed the so-called "quota law", requiring political parties to make at least one in five of their candidates a woman. Her "Lipstick Lobby", an informal group of women leg-

islators from all parties, passed the Bill two years ago.

"Unfortunately, both men and women always saw politics as a male domain," congresswoman Sandra Starling said at the time. "We hope this Quota Law will change that mentality. We hope it will spark a cultural revolution." Ms Suplicy hopes to amend the law this year

to make it one female candidate for every two males.

To press her point, Ms Suplicy issued a handbook entitled *Women Without Fear Of Power: Our Time Has Come*. However, there are still only half a dozen women senators out of a total 81 and only 34 female MPs out of 513.

Despite her bourgeois im-

age, Ms Suplicy's feminism has boosted the fortunes of the Workers' Party, long associated with bearded leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. "Just as in the US and Britain, the political divide has become less black and white here," said a diplomat in the capital, Brasilia. "Ms Suplicy is to a large extent the symbol of Brazil's New Left."

While her present power base is restricted to the city and state of Sao Paulo, Ms Suplicy's feminist policies - including free choice on abortion - are increasingly finding an echo elsewhere, mainly in Rio de Janeiro and other cities. But she will have to make her mark among the poor and often illiterate inhabitants of Brazil's countryside if her party is seriously to challenge President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in presidential elections in October.

Despite his "neo-liberal" capitalist economic policy, Mr Cardoso, 66, is expected to win a second term.

Ms Suplicy and her party claim Mr Cardoso's economic policies are widening the rich-poor divide. Brazil has been rocked in recent weeks by clashes involving farmers who are suffering serious famine as a result of drought. Accusing the authorities of doing nothing to help them, farmers have been looting shops for basic foods. Both Ms Suplicy's party and the Catholic church have condemned the looting, saying the farmers are starving and have no other choice.

America becomes fatter overnight

UP TO 29 million Americans awoke yesterday to a rude surprise. Having thought of themselves as comfortably average in size and weight, they suddenly found they were about to be re-designated as "obese". This startling turn in their fortunes resulted from a government proposal to define obesity downwards, writes Mary De-Jevsky in Washington.

The official height-weight scale, which produces the "body mass" index that is used to define obesity, is being revised. In future, someone who stands 5 foot 9 inches tall, for instance, would be considered obese if he or she weighed in at 169 pounds or more, 13 pounds less than at present.

The new index would classify 97 million adults, more than half the adult population of the US, as obese. The revision reflects concern in American health circles about the increasing incidence of obesity and associated diseases such as diabetes and cardiac ailments, and is said - by some of the scientists involved - to be intended to give people a "nudge" towards losing weight.

French pilots poised to call off strike

By John Lichfield
in Paris

STRIKING French pilots seemed last night to be ready to abandon a three days' old strike which has threatened to disrupt long-distance travel to the World Cup next week.

As negotiations resumed, it emerged that the main pilots' union had voted to accept the broad outline of concessions offered by Air France and the French government. Many of the details remained undecided, and the views of smaller pilots' unions were unclear, but all the signs pointed to an agreement to call off the strike by today.

A flurry of embarrassing but less significant industrial actions continues. A nationwide strike by ticket inspectors will disrupt train services today but a strike by a minority of train

drivers on the first day of the World Cup next Wednesday is expected to have little impact.

The pilots' strike, which has grounded up to 90 per cent of Air France flights worldwide this week, has been a source of deep mortification to the government. France had hoped that the World Cup would present an image of a welcoming, modern and capable nation.

Examination of the small-print is likely to reveal that the pilots got the best of the argument. Air France had asked the pilots, who earn an average annual salary of £75,000, to accept a 15 per cent pay cut over three years, in return for shares in the company.

On Tuesday, Air France suggested that the pay cut could be "temporary": in other words the pilots could take the shares and then have their pay levels

gradually restored. The government is expected to make up the rest of the savings, possibly by offering concessions on state employment contributions. At first the pilots rejected this proposal but the largest union decided yesterday morning to accept it in principle as part of a wider settlement.

Prime Minister Lionel Jospin said yesterday he would open the files on illegal wiretaps carried out during Francois Mitterrand's presidency. Reuters reports. Mr Jospin said he would waive the official secrets act for the wiretapping files. Mr Mitterrand died in 1996, seven months after leaving office. The files contain information on journalists, lawyers and politicians whose telephone conversations were monitored from 1982 to 1986 by Mitterrand's anti-terrorism unit.

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Hope of more trauma survivors

Kosovo talks collapse as Serbia torch villages

Botha claims bias

Nagra could save rhinos

Libian sentenced to

كلنا من الأصل

Hope of finding more train crash survivors fades

By Imre Karacs
in Eschede

THE small street running past the bungalows and lush gardens of Eschede rises towards the bridge and then it is no more. The flyover that stood there two days ago, linking this neighbourhood with the bigger houses across the tracks is gone. The road ends mid-air.

Below the bridge panels, now resting on the rails, two carriages lie crushed, windows broken, their undercarriages twisted. Rescue workers struggling against the clock managed to free one of the wagons yesterday, but found only more corpses, bringing the toll ever closer to the estimated 100.

From the precipice at the edge of the former flyover, more carriages lie at all sorts of strange angles. Some seem almost intact, others are mangled and sliced into slivers of red and white tin. One wagon rests on the verge, hurled towards the street by the force of the collision.

The site has been sealed off by police. Eschede gives the impression of being under siege. Ambulances race away towards the nearby towns, the roads tremble under the weight of the armour-plated vehicles of border troops brought in to help with the task of digging the train out of its concrete sarcophagus.

Under floodlights, crews were taking turns to lift large blocks of rubble with the aid of two large cranes and chains. Fears that a group of school-children lay trapped in the restaurant car proved unfounded, but hope for any survivors has evaporated.

As a special commission was set up to investigate the acci-

dent, German railways denied earlier suggestions that one of its own road vehicles might have caused the tragedy. Attention was shifting last night to a damaged section of the track six kilometres (four miles) from Eschede. Although officials refused to speculate, they did not deny the possibility that one of the carriages might have gone off the rails at this point.

According to this scenario, the carriage was dragged along with one side slightly protruding, and crashed into the pillars supporting the bridge.

Two workers who had been doing signal maintenance on an adjacent track were missing, presumed dead. Their car was crushed beneath the debris, though it was unclear whether it had been parked along the tracks or on the overpass.

Relatives of many victims were still waiting for confirmation yesterday, because some of the bodies had been damaged beyond recognition. Psychologists and special counsellors were brought in to help the victims' relatives and rescue workers unable to cope with the horror of their grisly discoveries.

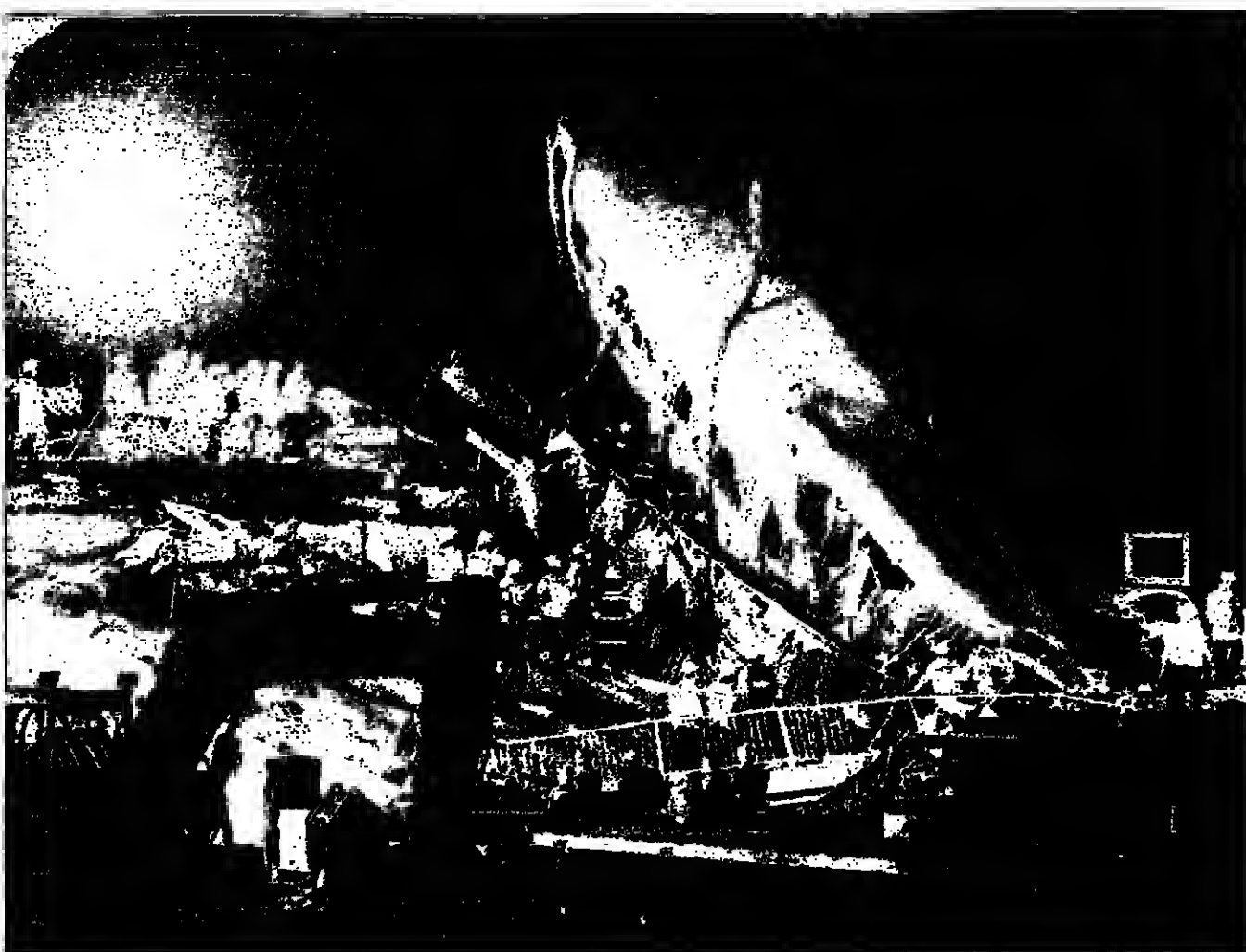
Flags flew at half-mast across Germany, as Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who cut short an official trip to Italy, visited the scene yesterday afternoon. He pledged DM1m government aid, matching the contributions promised by the regional government in Lower Saxony.

The town of Eschede was in shock. Only last year, it organised grand celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of its railway station - a reminder that the track itself, though upgraded in recent years, was very old. In other ar-

cas, new track has been created for the newest express trains.

Meanwhile, as the investigations into the causes of the accident got fully under way, the first doubts about their terms surfaced. In yesterday's *Frankfurter Rundschau*, a former railway official criticised the fact that the inquiry is being conducted internally, rather than bringing in outside experts to establish the exact cause of the accident.

"If a well-known car manufacturer has a car which turns over, it doesn't just go to the nearest MoT point to have the thing looked at. He gets the best experts in the country, to examine the causes - and immediately."



Rescue workers - working under floodlights - use a crane to lift one of the derailed carriages early yesterday as they continued their search for victims buried under the wreckage of Wednesday's crash, at Eschede in northern Germany, which left at least 100 people dead

Photograph: Jan Bauer/AP

Kosovo talks collapse as Serbs torch villages

By Rupert Cornwell

AS TENSIONS mounted further in Kosovo, leaders of the province's ethnic Albanian majority last night pulled out of scheduled talks with Serbian authorities, and a senior European foreign minister urged direct Nato intervention to restore stability in the region.

The talks had been due today, but representatives of the ethnic Albanians said that they had been rendered pointless by the latest massive Serb offensive, which had taken scores of lives, reduced entire villages to rubble and made up to 50,000 people homeless.

Simultaneously, pressure intensified for stronger action from the West to halt the fighting. Speaking at a regional summit in the Ukrainian resort of Yalta, the Albanian Foreign Minister, Paskal Milo, said the province was "on the eve of open war", while his German opposite number, Klaus Kinkel, demanded immediate measures to prevent a flood of refugees into the European Union.

"Nato will be there to intervene this time if necessary," Mr Kinkel said at an EU meeting in Palermo. He vowed there would be no repeat of the inaction

which allowed the Bosnian war to drag on for three years.

Almost certainly, the contact group of leading Western powers will meet in the next few days, and at the very least reimpose the economic sanctions on Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic that were briefly suspended after he agreed to enter the talks.

It may also accelerate and expand Nato's plans to impose a *cordon sanitaire* around Kosovo. Albania, already Europe's poorest country, has appealed for extra foreign aid to help with the 12,000 refugees from Kosovo it is housing, not to mention the thousands more seeking to join them. Officials in Tirana also warn of "hot pursuit" raids by the Serbs into Albania proper, a first step towards a feared internationalisation of the crisis.

Since February, more than 250 people have died in the fighting, including 20 Serbian police killed by guerrillas of the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose campaign for full independence has radicalised the conflict, and eroded the influence of ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova, who opposes the use of violence.

Thanks however to Mr Milosevic, violence is engulfing the region, and Mr Rugova's room for manoeuvre is shrinking daily.

Botha claims bias

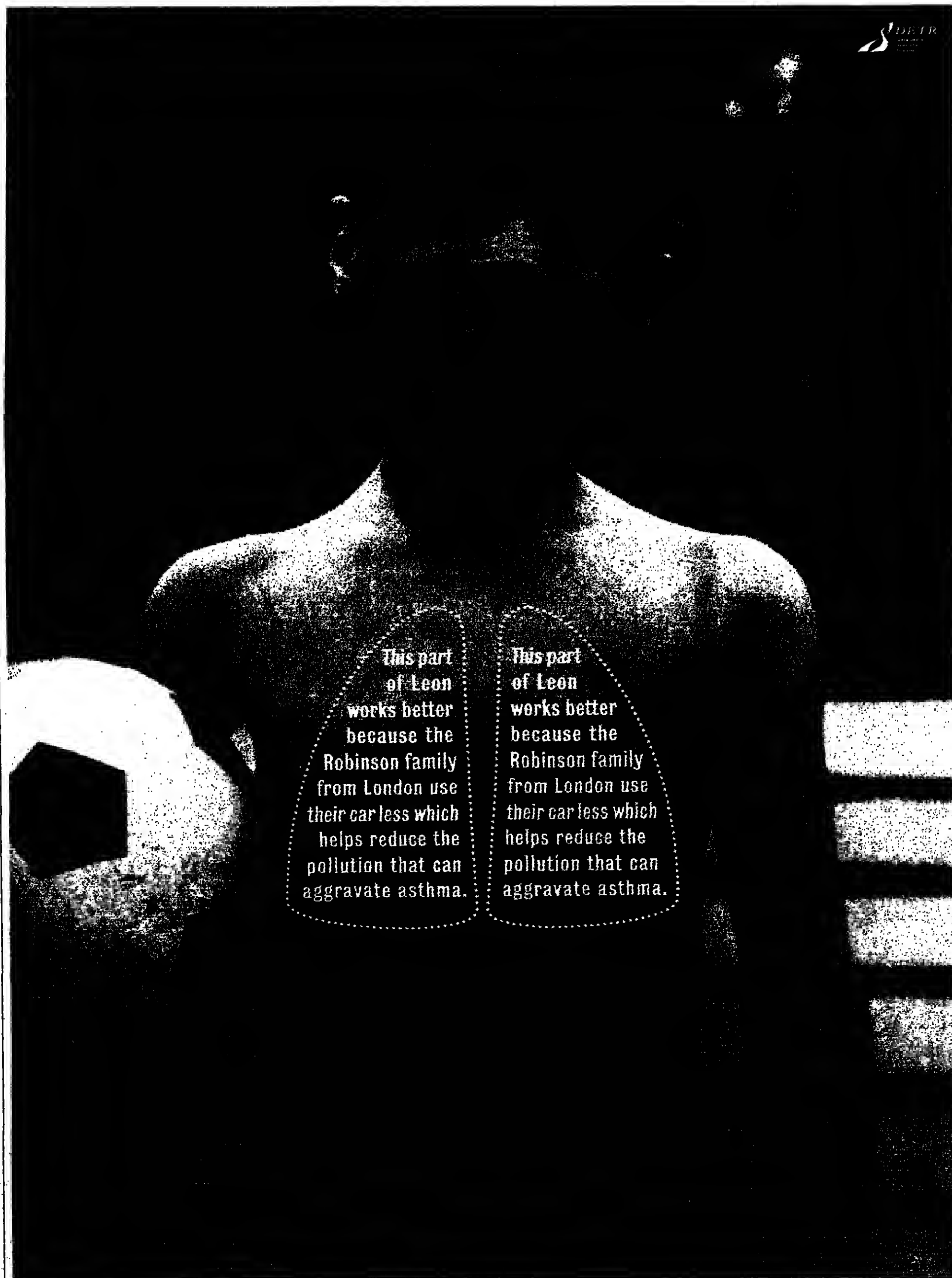
ARCHBISHOP Desmond Tutu yesterday denied his Truth and Reconciliation Commission was biased. Argument about the morality of apartheid raged at the trial of former president PW Botha, 82, who is charged with contempt for refusing to testify at the commission over claims that his government endorsed human rights violations. Botha's lawyers sought to prove that the probe was not even-handed. — Reuters, George

Viagra could save rhinos

THE new potency pill Viagra could help save Africa's endangered rhino, a South African conservationist said yesterday. "Viagra is supposed to aid one's sex life," said David Newton of Traffic, which monitors trade in wild animals. "Maybe now this will take over and reduce the myth that the rhino horn is an aphrodisiac." — Reuters, Cape Town

Lesbian sentenced to death

A UKRAINIAN woman was sentenced to death after killing a man who flirted with her and two other people who allegedly teased her for being a lesbian. — AP, Kiev



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India and Pakistan told to halt arms race

By Rupert Cornwell

THE "Big Five" nuclear powers last night mounted a concerted effort to halt the south Asian arms race, and persuade India and Pakistan to sign international treaties banning nuclear tests and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

At a hastily arranged meeting at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, the foreign ministers of Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States – the five permanent members of the UN Security Council who are also the "official" nuclear states – called on Delhi and Islamabad to hold off from further tests and commit themselves to ending production of the fissile material required for nuclear weapons.

After the initial muddled response to India's tests, with the US imposing sanctions and most of its allies refusing to follow suit, the Geneva session was designed to show how the world's nearest thing to a "directorate" of dominant powers is retaking the initiative in the proliferation issue.

But the display of unity, and the shared fear that the Indian and Pakistani tests could encourage other states to go nuclear, belies wide differences among the Five on how to proceed, now that sanctions, and the threat of sanctions, have been proved useless as a deterrent.

"This will not be a punitive meeting," British officials said, thus endorsing the argument of the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, that punishing India and Pakistan will only make them less inclined to go along with the wishes of the international community.

But the Americans are adamant

that the two must not be rewarded for their tests by being given some form of enhanced nuclear status, and least of all by being reclassified as fully-fledged nuclear states alongside the P-5 countries under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), cornerstone since 1970 of international efforts to keep such weapons in as few hands as possible.

Any step in that direction, Washington warns, would simply encourage other countries, including some in flashpoint regions like the Middle East, to try and join the club and thus render the NPT a dead letter.

But for all the new tension they have generated, and whatever the undeniable risk of further proliferation, last month's tit-for-tat tests, five by India and six by Pakistan, have at least shaken up the global nuclear debate, and forced some of its basic assumptions to be re-examined.

At a minimum it will give the US and Russia cause to speed up negotiations on further cuts in their arsenals, accounting for over 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons, and which provide India its main argument in refusing to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, signed by 149 countries. Why should we renounce nuclear weapons, Delhi asks, when other countries insist on keeping theirs?

Washington and Moscow signed the Start II treaty in the early 1990s, but the Duma has failed to ratify it, and until this happens the US says it will not embark on the far more ambitious Start III talks on which both sides are agreed in principle. And before these negotiations reach fruition, Britain and France refuse to contemplate getting rid of their weapons.



An Italian fisherman throwing his knife at Greenpeace demonstrators yesterday off the coast of Sardinia. The environmental activists were protesting against driftnet fishing and had disabled an Italian boat's nets. Photograph: Reuters

Euro club shows Brown the door

By Katherine Butler
in Luxembourg

GORDON BROWN, the Chancellor, subjected himself to formal humiliation last night as ministers from the 11 euro-zone countries gathered at a chateau in Luxembourg for the inaugural meeting of their single currency inner circle, Euro-XI.

As representative of Britain's European Union presidency Mr Brown was insisting on his right to attend the opening formalities at Senningen Castle, but was told he would have to leave the room almost immediately. He was not allowed to attend a dinner that followed the first

meeting of the new G8-style body which will co-ordinate economic policy in the euro-area.

Senior officials of the euro-zone countries expressed amazement at his decision to muscle in on the informal meeting in the light of Britain's decision to opt out of the single currency. It merely highlighted Britain's political marginalisation, they said.

"He is a gatecrasher," said a Bonn source, "he is bringing himself down to a level even ambassadors would not accept." Another senior EU diplomat described British strategy as "naïve" and said it reflected the difficulty London has in understanding that Britain will not be at the heart of things.

Mr Brown will be back in the chair this morning when all 15 finance ministers hold one of their routine monthly meetings, also in Luxembourg.

Tony Blair battled tooth and nail last year to prevent the establishment of Euro-XI without Britain. At a summit of EU heads of government in December he claimed that he had managed to reduce the status of the new group to an informal dining circle and that Britain would be automatically present for any meaningful discussions.

But other governments insist that

the 11 participating ministers alone will decide what constitutes a matter of "common interest" when the meetings will be opened up to the four "outs", Britain, Denmark, Greece and Sweden.

Last night's first meeting was organised during the British EU presidency in what some officials believe was an attempt by the French to score a political point by demonstrating the practical consequences of Britain's Emu opt-out. Mr Brown was replaced in the chair after a few minutes by Rudolph Edlinger, the Austrian finance minister whose government succeeds Britain in the EU chair next month.

Bulgaria's exiled king scores a palace coup

By Marcus Tanner

IN AN extraordinary ruling – that will have Europe's other ex-royals salivating with envy – Bulgaria's High Court yesterday handed back to the exiled heir to the throne all the former dynasty's property.

Simeon II, who was 10 when the Communists seized the royal estates in 1947 and has spent most of his adult life as a businessman in Spain, was transformed at the stroke of a judge's pen to one of Europe's greatest landowners and the proud possessor of palaces at Vrnja, near the capital Sofia, and Czarska (Emperor's) Bistrusa, in the Rila mountains, 50 miles south of Sofia.

Also thrown in are three hunting lodges in the hills and two humble farm houses near the city of Plovdiv.

It is an astonishing turn of fortune for the Bulgarian branch of the Coburg family and one not repeated in any other former people's republics in Eastern Europe, none of which has returned to their former royal estates.

The Bulgarian royals had an eccentric reputation – a good thing, perhaps, in the Balkans. The first Bulgarian Coburg, "Foxy" Ferdinand, who abdicated after the First World War, often embarrassed his fellow royals with his hilariously feminine manner and dress sense.

But he was a great diplomat and was famous, too, for his unrivalled collection of rare butterflies. His son, Boris, Simeon's late father, is still remembered by some for his love of driving steam trains.

Simeon himself reigned briefly in Sofia before the Communists forced him out in 1946. But absence – clearly – has only made the heart grow fonder.

For while most Romanians, Serbs and Russians seem to have put the monarchy well behind them, Simeon won a tumultuous ovation from the crowds during two brief returns to his homeland in 1996 and 1997.



هكذا من الأصل

Pilgrims follow Rasputin's steps

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

A PILGRIMAGE is under way in Russia that, if successfully completed, will far outshine even the feats of the foot-slogging Rasputin, the self-styled holy man who mesmerised the court of the last tsar, Nicholas II, and his wife Alexandra.

Historians have questioned boasts made by the bedraggled Siberian peasant that he once saw an apparition of the Virgin Mary which inspired him to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But he does seem to have trekked around Russia, joining the legion of clerics, self-proclaimed prophets and assorted cranks who wandered the length and breadth of the country dispensing their wisdom and living off the charity of others.

Now - a century on - he is about to be out-classed. A small party of Russian Orthodox pilgrims has set off from Vladivostok on the Sea of Japan to walk 6,300 miles across Siberia and the Urals to Moscow in European Russia.

Although some intend to use public transport for parts of the journey, others plan to walk the whole way. Carrying icons for the entire route, they expect to cover just under 20 miles a day, arriving in Moscow a week after the turn of the millennium - on 7 January 2000, Orthodox's Christmas Day.

Like the wandering clerics of the past, they plan to baptise people, recruit converts and conduct weddings in the towns and villages along their path. The journey will take them across seven time zones and an unforgiving, empty landscape in which winter temperatures can plunge to -45 degrees and are constantly well below freezing. "This is to remind people that they are Russian," one

of the party, Mikhail Alexandrov, 41, told the Vladivostok News as they set out. "It's to return to our base, the only base of the Russian people: the Orthodox faith. It is the only belief that can strengthen our motherland and restore our people."

In contrast to the Soviet era - when the Church was restricted and, at times, severely repressed - the pilgrims were waved off cheerfully by the regional governor, a Kremlin representative, and the local head of the security services.

The concept of the pilgrim - or "palomnik" - and his long, painful, penitential treks into a hostile wilderness is deeply embedded in the Russian Orthodox tradition, and

pilgrimages to Russia's long chain of monastic shrines. Nor was he the only tsar to do so: Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra went on trips to monasteries to pray - to no avail, as it turned out. Some Russians went further afield: by the 19th century, well-off believers were travelling to the Holy Land in significant numbers, a practice that has since revived.

In the last few years, advertisements - unimaginable under Communism - have begun appearing in the press and churches offering pilgrimages to religious sites in France, Israel and elsewhere.

The Vladivostok-Moscow trek coincides with another, darker, reminder that the distinction between past and present in the Orthodox Church is barely visible. Reports surfaced this week of a conflict between clerics, centring on allegations that the conservative churchman, Bishop Nikon of Yekaterinburg, has ordered that "heretical books" be confiscated from theological students at an ecclesiastical school and publicly burned.

Meanwhile, even Rasputin's claim to have had a divine apparition has been matched. One of those joining the pilgrimage to Moscow was Igor Chernozatonsky, head of a pyramid investment scheme which crashed last year, hunking \$5,000 investors in the Far East. When his fund fell apart, he disappeared. This week he suddenly resurfaced among the monks and other pilgrims on the road, claiming that the Virgin Mary had instructed him to walk to Moscow. "This is God's punishment for my sins," he told reporters as he trudged solemnly along, icon in hand, increasing the distance between him and his creditors with every step.



The pilgrims setting off from Vladivostok will walk 6,300 miles and cross seven time zones

China lets Hong Kong mark anniversary of Tiananmen Square massacre



A PRO-DEMOCRACY supporter and his son taking part in a rain-drenched candlelit vigil in Hong Kong yesterday, on the ninth anniversary of the Tianan-

men Square massacre in Peking. In the first such ceremony under Chinese rule, tens of thousands of Hong Kong residents gathered in Victoria Park to

mourn the students who died in the massacre. Even though Peking has kept a tight rein on Hong Kong since reassuming sovereignty last July, those who

came to the vigil said it was important to remember those who died, and to ensure that their own rights do not erode. Photograph: Craig Allen/AFP

Fight to clear Stalin's butcher

By Phil Reeves

RUSSIA's legal system yesterday found itself facing a dilemma: should it rehabilitate a man who was executed on wholly bogus charges, even though he was himself one of the authors of the campaign of terror that destroyed him?

The person in question is one of Stalin's henchmen, Nikolai Yezhov, who as head of the NKVD secret police between 1936-38, presided over purges - killings and imprisonment - on a scale unprecedented in Russian history.

The case, before the Military Board of Russia's Supreme Court, was brought at the request of a woman claiming to be Yezhov's adopted daughter, Natalya. Under the law, any Russian can apply to the court for the rehabilitation of victims of Stalin's mass repression.

She has been seeking his rehabilitation on the token charges for which he was executed: high treason, spying for foreign powers - including Britain - and the murder of his wife, who was poisoned two years before his death. He was shot in 1940, and replaced by the even more

feared Lavrenty Beria (who was also later shot).

The charges will have had a familiar ring to Yezhov, as they frequently appeared on the lists of thousands of names which Stalin sent to him, with instructions that they should be killed. Yezhov had a team of several hundred NKVD killers who carried out the slaughter. Citing espionage charges, Yezhov purged almost all of the NKVD, most of whom was shot in the head after a perfunctory trial.

Russia's courts, one might argue, have more pressing matters to wor-

ry about, including corruption, chaos in the legal system, official crime and millions of unpaid workers. But the case has raised a difficult point of principle, articulated by Sergei Kovalyov, Russia's leading human rights activist. He has argued that all executed Stalin-era secret police bosses - no matter how terrible - should be acquitted of the charges brought against them because they were "fake and nonsense".

The court took a different view yesterday. It refused to review Yezhov's case, arguing that he was "not fit for rehabilitation".

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You are what you spend



What does your money mean to you - do you splash it or save it? Therapist Dorothy Rowe says personality can be a key to financial fortunes.

By Andrew G Marshall

"MONEY has moved centre-stage in our lives, beforehand it was just something we earned and our concerns were about getting a pay rise," says Dorothy Rowe, one of Britain's foremost self-help authors and psychologists.

"When I was working in the Fifties and Sixties, we always knew when the next rise was due and concentrated on that. Now we have a much broader focus and more anxiety. It is difficult to find out what is happening and the implications."

We might be richer, but we are more confused about money than ever before. With no shortage of financial experts anxious to help us invest or explain the latest economic theory, we have reached information overload.

"It was only during the Eighties that people started thinking of money in a broader context and all national newspapers, including the tabloids, started carrying financial sections. Money used to be something you left to the bank manager, the chancellor or the exchequer and people who understood about those sorts of things."

"Going abroad for our holidays has meant that ordinary people have had to pay attention to the strength of the pound while the Thatcher government talked all the time about money."

The result is that we are bombarded with figures but have little understanding of our emotional relationship with money. So the time is ripe for Ms Rowe's eleventh

Politicians, in general, are the last people to trust with money because they have no self-awareness whatsoever.

book, *The Real Meaning of Money*.

As any therapist will tell you, the starting point of all voyages of self-discovery is the past. Rowe herself was born during the depression in an Australian coal and steel area, inappropriately called Happy Valley.

"My father was a commercial traveller for a food firm. Towards the end of the week we needed to see what Dad had in his brown leather suitcase of samples for our dinner! It was very difficult for my parents to manage."

"My father was very generous and would give money away, while my mother

was a hoarder who tried to make certain that nothing was wasted. Special things had to be hidden and kept for special times."

Rowe's own personal conflicts stretch back to this time. "My father would impress on me that money could disappear and it was nothing you could rely on. He would explain that there were situations where money was valueless - you can't eat it."

"In my marriage, money certainly disappeared very quickly, my husband did not look after it at all. Even though for the past 10 years I haven't had to think about money, in terms of getting from one pay-day to the next, I still have this idea that money can vanish."

Money will always be misunderstood because we use it in two very different ways: to maintain physical survival and maintain our sense of identity. Unfortunately our need to feed the latter can override our better judgement of the former.

"It is difficult to unhook the real necessities from what we just consider are necessities," says Rowe. "Our incomes have steadily increased, but our absolute needs have increased much quicker. I like to eat the very best parmesan from the fromagerie up the street, rather than a packet of grated from the supermarket - it is a difference I just cannot give up."

As a society we may find it easier to discuss personal matters more openly than our parents did, but money is still a very difficult topic, with friends happier to reveal their favourite sexual position than their bank balance. In a larger public arena it is even more difficult.

"It is easier to talk about money with somebody who is on the same earnings band as yourself. When there is a discrepancy, or could be, it becomes difficult because it raises issues of envy and pity. 'Being pitted is horrible. It really diminishes you,' she explains."

Talking to Ms Rowe, it becomes clear that only by understanding ourselves can we really understand money and what we are doing with it. "Sometimes people are fighting old battles and staving off disasters that are not real," she says. "Of necessity, I've always been a very independent person and had to look after myself; it is a very important part of who I am. Hopefully, when I'm older and need help, I will recognise that this desire could get in the way of what is best for me."

If the key to making good decisions about money is knowing yourself, we might need to think again about who we put in charge. "Although a lot of people today have gone to quite a lot of trouble to become self-aware - unfortunately Gordon Brown is not one of them! Men, in particular, rationalise to avoid looking at who they are. I'm sure we could find the

explanation for his tight fiscal policy in his puritanical Scottish upbringing."

"The ideas we overvalue are the ones we over-rationalise and defend to the death. Politicians, in general, are the last people to trust with money because they have no self-awareness whatsoever. In adversarial politics, MPs are forced to lie to toe the party line. What's worse, some of them even lie to themselves and if you lie to yourself you are bound to end up in trouble."

The central theme running through all Ms Rowe's books is that although we can not control events, we can change the way we view them. "What determines our

behaviour is not what happens to us, but how we interpret these events. It is something that even well-educated people do not understand."

Her technique involves peeling back the layers of meaning until the essence of our existence is revealed. Ms Rowe calls this effect laddering, each step is linked with the question: why is it important to you that, in this case, you are careful with money? "If I look after money, I am more likely to achieve what I want," she replies. Why is it important to you to achieve? "It is what life is about."

By understanding our psychological

bottom line it is easier to prioritise spending and divide the essentials from what society in general considers important. If we are more honest about our attitudes to money, perhaps we will feel less anxious."

However there is one central problem. "Money relates to the past and the future, and you can only be happy in the present," Ms Rowe believes. "Although you need to think about the consequence of your actions, the secret of a satisfying life is the ability to live in the moment."

The Real Meaning of Money is published by HarperCollins, price £7.99.



Photographs: Rui Xavier/Eric Larragideau

ARE YOU A FINANCIAL INTROVERT OR EXTROVERT?

1. In a financial crisis, would you find a solution where a) other people like you but won't respect you, or b) others won't like you but you will respect yourself?
2. If you had a small win on the lottery would you spend it by a) throwing a really good party and inviting all your friends, or b) taking a course which would significantly advance your career?
3. When out shopping do you a) enjoy spending and treasure beautiful things, or b) make practical purchases and have a theories about what do with your money?

MOSTLY A

You are a financial extrovert. Enjoying your money today, you are not keen on putting something by for retirement. Extroverts have beautiful possessions like silverware, which introverts think are waste of money, needing too much cleaning - unless they hope to impress their boss! While many extroverts like to achieve, their top priority is to create and maintain relationships. They would rather be active than sit around introspecting. Famous financial extroverts include Nick Leeson (who always looked after his friends) and Ronald Reagan (who always wanted to be liked).

MOSTLY B

You are a financial introvert. Your top priority is having a sense of achievement, individual development, organisation and control. You are good at introspection but not necessarily good at understanding yourself; many male introverts would rather concentrate on theories about the perfect football team. You have a well-funded pension but life can sometimes seem one long grind. By planning the next rung up the ladder of success, you can fail to enjoy today's achievements. Famous financial introverts include Margaret Thatcher.

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Extroverts and introverts screw themselves up in equal numbers, so there is no advantage in being one or the other. However, by learning to develop the other side of your personality you can have a better relationship with money. A good business or romantic partnership is one of opposites - where an introvert and an extrovert appreciates the other's top priority and abilities - just think of Maggie and Ron. An introvert will create the grand plan while the extrovert maintains good relationships.

FIND OUT WHO THEY

FA

AT FRANCE 98



Tony Adams of Arsenal & England

"I don't fear anybody. I respect all the great strikers. Ronaldo etc, but there is not one player in the World Cup I fear!"

The essential World Cup Guide

Free in this weeks Independent on Sunday a 32 page colour guide, with team by team analysis, interviews with England stars past and present and a spotlight on Brazil's brilliant Denilson

'All I want is to chatter and joke again'

Cancer robbed broadcaster John Diamond of his most precious asset - his voice. He tells of his battle to be heard

IF YOU are, like me, a child of the discovery age, you will remember normal childhood lessons being punctuated by those grainy educational films put out by the Federación of Aluminium Smelters or the Society of Tin Extractors or whatever, showing us how important was their exciting product to our humdrum lives. Invariably, there would be a scene where the zinc or the nickel is suddenly removed from the schlemiel of a central character's world, affecting him in ways he would never have guessed, as the chair he is sitting on falls apart for lack of screws and the car he is driving suddenly loses its steering wheel.

Which may sound an unlikely simile for the way I feel at the moment, but it is. I promise you, an accurate one.

I am without my voice, and while I could have guessed at some of the effects the loss might have produced, my real concern is with the effects that have come as a surprise.

When I say I'm without my voice I don't mean that I'm without any voice at all, simply that the one I have isn't mine. It isn't anybody's much, nor even much of a voice at all. It is the lumpy and asymmetrical remnant of a voice that once was, a fragment around which I'm trying to build a new voice.

A year ago, more or less, I had about a third of my tongue removed. It was the

cancerous third, the third whose cells and cell-building apparatus had been corrupted by years of being kipped by tobacco smoke.

When we talk of our tongues we refer to the prehensile flap of pink muscle and taste-bud which extends from the back of our throat to the front of our mouth and, when we feel the need, beyond.

It's the bit which shovels food and water from the front of the mouth to the chate leading to the stomach, which undulates to give us the full vocal armoury of "t"s and "d"s and "k"s and "g"s. But the tongue is a damned great thing, its substructure anchored to the lower jaw and neck and it is from that muscly lump that a tumour the size of a golf ball was excised last year.

Before the operation I was a talker, a gabbler, a reader-outload of bed-time stories and a chubbable anecdotalist. I wasn't Oscar Wilde or Dorothy Parker, but I could do cut and thrust, intermediate badinage and advanced repartee.

Some of the time I did it for a living - I had radio shows with my name on them on Radio 4 and 5 Live and had done various television series over the years, as well as using my voice in my job as a question-asking print journalist. But mostly my voice was a recreational thing.

And now? When they carved the back out of my



John Diamond, who had to have a third of his tongue removed after it was found to be cancerous

tongue they closed the gap by dragging the whole of the front of it towards the back. Then they gave me six weeks of daily irradiation which left the remaining tissue red and painful. My tongue can reach the teeth at the front, but go no further forward, and after six months or more of speech therapy, I have perhaps a quarter of an inch of movement up and down and side to side.

It means that while you form a "t" by flicking the tip of your tongue to the top-front of your mouth, I do it by moving my whole jaw. You make a "k" by rolling the back of your tongue so that it clicks against the roof of the mouth and I do it by raising my larynx to get an approximation of the sound. It is a cumbersome way of

forming sounds and one of my surprises was how lazy I'd become. Where once I would dash to fill gaps in the conversation with my words I am now a grunter and a nodder, a shrugger and a tutter.

It's not because I can't say the words or that I don't like the sound I make when I say them - although that's true enough - but simply that saying them is hard work.

Early on in all of this, for instance, my wife asked me a question to which the chatterer in my head answered with an emphatic "Oh - absolutely!". What came out was a mean-mouthed "Yes".

It means - who'd have guessed? - that I have trouble getting a cab home in London. Like the tenth-floor-dwelling

dwarf in the riddle who takes the lift down but walks up 10 flights because he can reach the lower 'G' button but not the higher 10, I can cab it quite happily into the West End, but not back again. I live in the Goldhawk Road, a particular combination of sounds which I now find almost impossible.

There are other unguessables.

I can't kiss, for instance. I'm sure those muscles are still there, but I've forgotten how. It means my social air kisses are absolutely silent, which I can cope with, but that I can't properly kiss the children goodnight, which I find insufferable.

Nor can I tell jokes or crack gags. A *bon mot* needs space to work, but not too much. In conversation, I have the permanent sense of a diner spending hours trying to get the waiter's eye for the bill and then discovering every time that he's left his wallet at home.

I am in conversation; a crack comes to me, unbidden, and I start out of habit to launch it into the air. I make the opening grunt: the conversation continues. Eventually, there is space in between the others' words: I shoot my words out. They are slightly too late, and somebody didn't quite catch the last word.

(Some people understand me immediately and fully, others just can't.) They ask me to repeat it. I can't: it doesn't

bear repetition. It's a quick, jokey line, meaningless, useless unless you hear it the first time round. But they insist. Somebody else repeats it for me. Everyone smiles. I feel stupid. Next time I will know better.

But I never do. Things are getting better. I have a speech therapist who is wonderful and who sets me homework repeating unusable sentences. I usually skip the homework in the hope that the sentences I actually use will do the job of re-educating my stiff tongue just as well.

I am learning to speak more slowly, which helps. But - Which - Makes - Me - Feel - I'm - Giving - Dictation - To - Cretins - In - A - Foreign - Language.

I will, I hope, one day broadcast again, or if not that then at least crack a joke which the radio producer, letting me down gently, will understand.

But still I am not yet me because so much of me was my voice, my incontinent chatter. My chattering was a bad habit, I know, but unlike the bad habit which caused the cancer, it's one I'm desperate to get back.

'Inside Story: Tongue Tied', John Diamond's disquisition on life, death and cancer, is on BBC1 on 15 June at 10.30pm. 'C - Because Towards Get Cancer Too' is published by Vermilion on 11 June, price £9.99.

هلنا من الاصل

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Mild pain, but the Bank is right

INTEREST RATES have only risen by 1.5 percentage points since the election last year. In six bite-sized, quarter-point stages including yesterday's surprise move, but we are beginning to feel the pinch now. So what is going on? Are we in good times or bad, boom or bust? The truth is we are somewhere in between. Unfortunately this is not the Goldilocks economy of American dreams, neither too hot nor too cold. The British economy is more like Mother Bear and Father Bear's porridge mixed together, overheating in parts and stone cold elsewhere. Manufacturing industry is technically in recession, squeezed by interest rates and a high pound, while consumer spending is buoyant and house prices have not yet felt the chill of dearer mortgages.

It is, of course, exporters who make the most noise, while estate agents slap another £10,000 on the asking price in silence, which makes it sound as if things are worse than they are. Nor should we be too distracted by the illusion that the Asian meltdown is on the verge of pulling the world into slump. We have heard so much about globalisation that it is tempting to see the Russian economy as the next domino, but the crisis in Russia is almost exclusively internal. It is tempting, too, to fear that if Japanese and Korean investment in Britain goes temporarily AWOL, there will be no jobs for unemployed former miners in Wales. But we should remember that Norwegian and Australian companies invest much more here - only they tend not to go for the high-profile, high-subsidy greenfield sites.

But we should not be complacent. There is evidence that those parts of the British economy which are booming could be storing up inflationary trouble for the future. Inflationary expectations may be low as a result of our long run of low inflation since the pound was devalued out of the exchange rate mechanism in 1992. But the present state of the housing market especially suggests that Britain's even longer-run inflationary psychology has not yet been broken, and the Bank of England is right to tighten the screws. It would be all too easy to dismiss the recent rise in inflation as a blip caused by tax rises, but the last time we had a blip it got the Conservative Party where it is today, as well as doing serious damage to the economy. Indeed, this newspaper has consistently argued that rates should have been raised earlier. The Monetary Policy Committee held off from doing that in recent months only because of the strength of the pound. Its recent drop has obviously tipped the balance in the evenly divided committee.

Contrary to the impression given by the jargon of "the cumulative tightening of the labour market" in the committee's report, setting interest rates is an inexact science. The point to remember is that we will not know the impact of yesterday's decision for at least a year, by which time it will be too late to do anything about it if it is wrong. Given that the long-run dangers of inflation are greater than the short-run costs of the squeeze, the Bank is right to err on the side of caution.

Let us end this game of Commons softball

THE ABILITY of Parliament to hold the Government to account has diminished, is diminishing and ought to be increased. "This loss of accountability has been worsened by the growing trend for MPs to ask planted questions, soft full-losses of which the minister is already aware." We heartily agree. But these are not the words of Andrew Mackinlay, the heroic Labour back-bencher who writes for us today. They are those of Alastair Campbell, now the Prime Minister's press secretary, writing about the "crisis of confidence in Parliament" in the oow defunct *Today* newspaper, 10 March 1994.

Mr Mackinlay performed a valuable service in reminding Tony Blair of what was obvious to him and to his entourage before they found themselves in a position to be held to account. On Wednesday Mr Mackinlay used almost the same phrasing as Mr Campbell's four years ago: "Does the Prime Minister recall that, when we were in opposition, we used to groan at the fawning, obsequious, soft-ball, well-rehearsed and planted questions asked by Conservative members?" We all used to groan, and the truth upon which Mr Mackinlay hit is that we are groaning at the other lot now. There was one of those rare moments of surprise and recognition in the Commons at his question, and a rushing roar of approval which was notably unconfined to the opposition benches.

Mr Blair should listen to that sound, reread some of his press secretary's old columns and remember what he thought when he was looking in on the secret garden of power in frustration. Then he should implement the Mackinlay manifesto, by accepting the democratic good faith of back-bench MPs "who wish to provide scrutiny and accountability in this place" and by acting on the ideas for modernising Parliament floated yesterday.

In the end, this government will secure its position in public affection not by rigid discipline ensuring its MPs stay on message and Parliament becomes an arm of its propaganda machine, but by dealing openly with justified criticism. As Mr Campbell said in 1994: "You wonder, if the Government itself shows such repeated contempt for Parliament, why its members are surprised when the public expresses contempt for them."

Three strikes and...

PREPARE to resist the easy assumptions of the 1970s. It seems that industrial action has only to be threatened in three unrelated trades - in this case, broadcasting, firefighting and the London Underground - and we are facing a "summer of discontent", or a "new wave of industrial militancy". It helps that all three industries are high-profile and interest the metropolitan middle classes. (The Liverpool dockers were on strike for aces and no one paid a blind bit of notice.) The rest of us should simply prepare for a summer of mild irritation.



Alternative medicine

Sir: Professor Edvard Ernst has injected some much-needed sense into the prevalent enthusiasm for all kinds of unconventional medicine, but his is very much a minority voice ("Hidden truths behind healing hands", 2 June).

I have spent almost a quarter of a century as a conventionally qualified doctor practising two forms of complementary medicine, acupuncture and homeopathy, within the NHS. I have always felt it was an important part of the job to tell patients what could and could not be achieved by unconventional means. This task has become much harder recently, as uncritical optimism has been fostered by a vocal army of enthusiasts with little real understanding of the issues involved.

It is very difficult to publish books or articles which are in any way critical of complementary medicine; the message is not one that most people want to hear. Professor Ernst's article was a welcome exception. Dr ANTHONY CAMPBELL
London N14

Sir: Professor Ernst bemoans the lack of clinical studies on the effectiveness of various complementary therapies and describes chiropractic as unproven. He omits to mention that chiropractic is the only complementary therapy in the UK to have undergone any thorough evaluation by an independent medical research body (the Medical Research Council, who published two studies in the *British Medical Journal* in 1990 and 1995).

The results of both studies could hardly have been more positive about the benefits of chiropractic treatment, compared with orthodox medicine, for patients with low back pain.

The 1990 study concluded that chiropractic treatment had been significantly more successful in providing faster pain relief, greater patient satisfaction and measurably greater improvements (for example, only 21 per cent of the chiropractic patients required time off work compared with 39 per cent of the medical patients). A follow-up study in 1995 showed that 30 per cent fewer

of the chiropractic group had experienced relapses of their original low back pain. The MRC concluded that were chiropractic to be available on the NHS the potential savings would be huge.

Professor Ernst also suggests that chiropractic manipulation is potentially dangerous. All medical treatments carry risks. It has been generally accepted (by, amongst others, the Royal College of General Practitioners) that manipulation is very safe when performed by a qualified practitioner.

NEIL AUSTIN
London Chiropractic Clinic
London W1

Sir: In this heretofore "biased" media coverage of complementary medicine, Professor Ernst seems unaware of his own inevitable bias.

Far from "scientific evaluation" providing an objective and disinterested means of clarifying the relative efficacy of "scientific" and "complementary" medicine, such a methodology, steeped as it is in the ideologies of modern technocratic science, is itself just as culturally relative as are the complementary approaches which embrace a world-view which may well be incompatible with that of modern empirical science.

Inductively derived "ancient wisdoms" (which are crucially different from Ernst's principal target, "anecdotal evidence"), distilled over millennia of real human trial-and-error experience, are at least as likely to provide reliable evidence as are the mechanistic methods of modern science.

Dr RICHARD HOUSE
Norwich

Sir: I practise Shiatsu, one of the therapies for which, as Professor Ernst rightly points out, virtually no clinical trials have been carried out, and I entirely agree with his call for rigorous research.

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

In the meantime, how can I ensure that my clients are getting value for money? First, I ask them some detailed questions about their health problem and how it affects them. Second, I ask how they would know if their problem was to improve. Third, I check carefully session by session that it is improving. Fourth, if it isn't improving in any way, I will happily give them their money back. Fair enough?

NICHOLAS POLE
London NW8

Power and clean air

Sir: In your report "Power pollution linked to asthma" (27 May) you say that, according to research by the Atmospheric Particles Expert Group (APEG), power stations may be a major source of particulate air pollution. I would point out that APEG has not yet finalised the conclusions of its research and a preliminary draft report is not expected to be circulated for peer review until July. It is not possible therefore to comment on details of the research at this stage.

The Government's Digest of Environmental Statistics shows that road transport is responsible for about twice as much fine particulate emissions (known as PM₁₀) as power stations, and other industry for about three times as much. Coal- and oil-burning power stations are mostly remote from urban areas and do not normally contribute significantly to urban "particle pollution episodes". The electricity industry's own research indicates that the maximum PM₁₀ concentration downwind of a 2000MW coal station is well within the Government's air quality objective for 2005.

However, the electricity generators are far from complacent about their emissions. PM₁₀ and other emissions have all fallen substantially in recent years, with the switch from coal to gas, with improvements to dust capture plant and the installation of flue gas

desulphurisation plant, and further reductions are expected. PHILIP DAUBENEY
Chief Executive
Electricity Association
London SW1

Plight of the Bushmen

Sir: Caitlin Davies' difficulties in Botswana, following her concern at the forced removal of the Bushmeo from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), should come as no surprise to seasoned observers of Botswana ("Botswana drops case against British journalist", 26 May).

Survival has been campaigning for the land rights of the Botswanan Bushmen for 10 years now. In that time the government of Botswana has exhibited a marked reluctance to acknowledge the rights of the Bushmen to their land and way of life. When the government started the eviction of the Bushmeo from the CKGR, it assured its critics that no one would be forced to move. Yet force and coercion was used to move some 600 people. Now only 200 to 400 still remain inside the CKGR, resolute in their refusal to leave.

Though it has a reputation for being an open, democratic country, Botswana remains a place where the persecution and marginalisation of the Bushmen is a day-to-day reality. RICHARD GARDNER
Press Officer, Survival
London WC1

The loss of Gazza

Sir: Amid the brouhaha over Paul Gascoigne's omission from England's World Cup squad, the question we should be asking is whether our rivals will be happier now that the "most talented player of his generation" (leading article, 2 June) won't be dictating the team's attacking play. I fear that they will. ALAN MANKIKAR
Oxford

New council, old names

Sir: The arts world waits for Chris Smith to announce the names of the "new" Arts Council. I fear the list is likely to exacerbate the divide between the arts community and the Council.

For all the talk of a brand new body, one hears of many people being invited to apply including members of the old council, one of whom has already served 11 consecutive years.

My fear now is that some art forms will continue to be represented on Council by the people who have been chairing them for years and who have formulated their policies, and others will have no voice at all.

Dance, touring, drama, combined arts and the visual arts may all find themselves lacking a seat on Council and thus seriously disadvantaged in the competition for funds. All previous art-form chairs should be invited to sit - or cone. STEPHEN PHILLIPS
Halsbury,
East Sussex
The writer is Arts Council Chair of Touring

Ulster deal

Sir: Since the two main stumbling blocks to agreement in Northern Ireland would appear to be the release of terrorists and the decommissioning of arms, why not make one contingent on the other - for each hatch handed in by either side, one prisoner would be let out. JOHN A DAVIS
Cambridge

Could do better

Sir: The A-levels exam period will soon bring floods of articles about declining standards among the candidates. May I get there first by suggesting the examiners are no better? This question was from the Oxford and Cambridge examining board's English literature paper: *Discuss the Shakespeare's dramatic presentation of justice and mercy in this passage.* EMMA KING
Thurston,
Norfolk

Rhyme with no reason - an American visitor's guide to that quaint British slang



MILES KINGSTON

THE THING that really separates the British from the Americans is our use of rhyming slang. As all Americans know, the streets of our great cities are full of Cockney people speaking to each other in rhyming slang, and maybe the lanes of our great villages as well, come to that. Just as the English suspect that when they go into a Welsh pub, everyone in there switches immediately from English to Welsh, so Americans have a vague suspicion that when they wander into a group of Britons, they will immediately start conversing in rhyming slang, not so much to avoid being understood by the Americans as to seem a bit more colourful and add a bit of zest to their humdrum tourist existence.

If this is so, and I am sure it is, it is about time that American visitors were given some help in this matter. And that is why

today I am addressing myself to American readers who wish to have a quick and easy entrée into rhyming slang. Yes, it is quick. Yes, it is easy. All you have to remember is two basic things.

1. The people who speak rhyming slang often don't know what they're talking about either.

2. This is because the word they use doesn't rhyme with the real meaning. It's the word they DON'T use which rhymes with the real meaning. A "tifter" is a hat, because "hat" rhymes with "tar", which is the missing bit of "tifter tar". OK?

Now, rhyming slang changes and develops a lot over the years, with new words constantly coming in and old ones going out. A "Ruby Murray" or "Ruby" used to be slang for "curry", but that one has faded now, because the memory of Ruby Murray has faded. "Jimmy Wilde", going even fur-

ther back, was "mild", as in mild beer, but not many people remember Jimmy Wilde, and not many people, I'm afraid to say, remember mild beer. But new phrases are constantly coming into the language, based on new celebrities and new institutions.

For instance, you may hear someone English say, "I'm going down the road for a quick Basil", and you may think in your innocence that they are going to buy the herb of the same name. Not at all. He is going down the road for a balti meal. Balti rhymes with Fawley, and Basil Fawley therefore means a balti meal. Drop off the Fawley and you've got a Basil!

This will tend to confuse you if you have never heard of Basil Fawley or, indeed, if balti cooking has not yet reached the USA. Similarly, if you have never heard of some of our politicians you may be confused by such phrases as "I'm going to Mandy's

place", which means "I'm going home". "Mandy" is a nickname for a politician called Peter Mandelson, who has been put in charge of building a dome to celebrate the Millennium. So "Mandy's place" is "Mandy's Dome" which rhymes with home.

Getting there? Here are a few more. Wallace - vomit (Wallace and Grommet as in "I feel awful, I think I'm going to have a Wallace")

Edna - drink (Edna Evcrage - beverage) Women's names seem inextricably linked with drink. "Vera Lynn" used to mean "gin". More up to date we have...

Germaine - beer (Germaine Greer) Janet - water (Janet Street-Porter) Here, in no particular order, are some other modern rhyming slang terms. Norman - GBH (Norman St John Stevas - grievous) Comic - thief (comic relief)

Perrier'd - fed up (Perrier award - bored) Cut - go (Cut and blow) Kiwi - suit (kiwi fruit - "Smart do tonight, so I'll put on my kiwi") Parked - died (park and ride) Drophead - hairpiece (Drophead coupé - toupée; which is quite neat, when you think that drophead almost means toupée anyway) Paul - curtain (Paul Merton - "Pull the pauls") Angus - Satan (after Angus Deayton; nothing rhymes with Hislop, so far as I know) Trevor - hamburger (Trevor Macdonald) Michael - foe (Michael Heseltine; as in "I thought I was going to be sent down but they let me off with a Michael") Barry - commissioner (Barry Norman - doorman)

So, remember: if you hear any of these phrases in your neck of the woods this summer, it's probably an American visitor....

Machiavelli's finest pupils are Tony Blair and Gordon Brown



DONALD
MACINTYRE

IN *The Prince*, a book which shares with *Das Kapital* the distinction of being one of the most discussed and least read in European literature, Machiavelli has something to say about public spending: too much of it means a ruler "will always use up his resources and he will be obliged, eventually... to burden the people with excessive taxes and do everything possible to raise funds. This will bring to make him hateful to his subjects, and... he will not be much esteemed by anyone."

This is rather a good moderniser's account of what happened to the 1974-79 Labour Government. (Even without adding the words "including calling in the IMF" at the end of the first sentence in the quotation). It conjures vividly the spectre which haunts Gordon Brown - and for that matter Tony Blair - more than any other. And it certainly summarizes why both men thought - and think - that broadly maintaining the austere public spending regime laid down by the previous Tory Chancellor increases rather than decreases their chances of winning the all important second General Election.

The humbly short shrift given to union leaders this week, not to mention Gordon Brown's studiously orthodox speech in the City, both serve to underline the core belief at both famous Downing Street addresses that Labour's endemic habit of spending first and paying later was part of what makes it the only political party in this century never to have served two full terms.

And as with fiscal policy, so with monetary policy. Don't suppose for a moment that yesterday's increase in interest rates will have been unwelcome to either Brown or Blair. OK, the pound went up again. Yes, manufacturing industry will wince. Sure, some mortgage payers will shudder.

The fact is that both men would have liked the Bank of England to move faster and more sharply towards a rise which the markets could credibly judge to be the last. Brown didn't sacrifice, as his first action in office, the cherished power of politicians to manipulate interest rates for reasons of short term popularity, only to find that the Bank behaved more politically than the politicians.

Indeed there has been audible irritation in parts of Whitehall at those members of the Monetary Policy Committee who stray, for one reason or another, from the narrow remit of counter-inflation policy. This is especially because there is a direct connection between policy on rates and that on spending.

The Government's answer to the Liberal Democrats' complaints about its alleged miserliness is that, may need surpluses not for a pre-election war chest but in order to weather a recession, made all the likelier if the Bank turns out to have misjudged things.

Which is another reason for the Chancellor to show extreme prudence. Yes, but within limits. The Chancellor and Prime Minister may not be quite as immune to short term political gratification as they look.

Part of what makes the independence of the Bank of England such a master-stroke is the way in which it has protected the government from bearing the brunt of the attacks over the level of sterling as a result of interest rate rises which both Chancellor and Prime Minister had decided well before the election would be necessary. That rates might have gone up even faster had they had their way only underlines the point: would Labour's poll lead be as high as it is if the decisions had been taken at the Treasury?

Ministers have no such protection against criticisms on spending. They may scorn the idea that the poor turnout at the local government elections, and, rather more dramatically, the opinion poll rating of the Scottish National Party, are the result of the Government's fiscal toughness. But they are omens which cannot wholly be ignored. The SNP, beginning a hugely upbeat conference in Perth today, are current favourites to win power in assembly elections only a year away.

So it is just as well that the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review next month will not be quite as austere as it has looked at times this week. It's already well known that Education and Health will be significant net gainers from this huge Whitehall-wide exercise of setting the priorities for the next three years. The Defence budget, though trimmed, will not yield up all the treasures Brown would have liked it to. But elsewhere there will be some painful losses to compensate for the gains.

The electorate shows little sign of wanting Brown to abandon prudence

gains. Brown already knew last week that he had released some serious money for Frank Dobson and David Blunkett without ditching his precious surpluses.

But they are not alone. Brown's speech, in which he re-emphasised the "golden rule" that public borrowing will be used only for investment, was widely interpreted as essentially negative. But I suspect part of its purpose was subliminally to remind the markets that it will not be a breach of his self-imposed discipline if he announces public funds for capital infrastructure investment which could - even if only to a limited and temporary extent - slow the rapid rate at which borrowing is falling. Public transport - of which Wednesday's modest £140m (and rather less modest £3.8bn loan guarantee) for John Prescott's Channel Tunnel Link is likely to be a harbinger - will almost certainly be the main beneficiary.

The war chest jibe assumes that Brown and Blair intend merely to accumulate surpluses until unleashing a controlled spending spree just before the general election. But it is doubtful that they would think that politically wise, even if it were not unduly cynical. The electorate shows little sign of wanting Brown to abandon prudence. But it is ready for a bankable downpayment on the Government's promises. Even Machiavelli would have approved of that.

Clare Short is right - there is more to the Third World than famine



SUZANNE
MOORE

READING aloud a profile of the billionaire super-nerd Bill Gates the other day, I announced to anyone who was listening: "Did you know that Bill Gates is rich enough to give every man, woman and child in the whole world \$9 each?" "So, why doesn't he?" asked my seven year-old daughter.

It was a good question and not one that I could easily answer. In fact, I find it difficult to explain to my children the vast inequalities they see all round them. "Why is that man sleeping outside?" "Where does he brush his teeth?" "Why is that old lady looking in dustbins?"

I can't explain it to them because I can't explain it to myself, and when images of starving children appear on TV, I often turn away. This is not because I am so sensitive, or have seen too many to care any more, or suffer from that new complaint "compassion fatigue". I find them simply overwhelming, the misery so vast and yet so outside my own experience, that I feel powerless.

Something must be done, but what exactly? Putting a tenner in an envelope seems a futile gesture when famine comes around year after year. Obviously not everyone has the same reaction. Images of hunger spur on all kinds of ordinary people to get something done, to try to help, to reach out to those they will never meet, to feel a common human bond. This is laudable and is why Clare Short's remarks over the appeals for aid in the Sudan have been seen as controversial; callous even. She doesn't care about starving children, whereas others do. Now even caring is competitive: whose hearts bleed more? Clare Short's? Unicef's? The single mother's who pledges what she can ill afford?

Yet the points that Short has made are worth making. Her argument is a complicated one which is seen as somehow tricky in the emotional context of starving babies.

She is concerned in general at the portrayal of developing countries as full of "constant suffering, failure and famine", as always in crisis. She has also been critical of the "mutual parasitism of the media and the fund-raiser" as this can lead to terrible pessimism about the possibility of progress.

None of these arguments are especially new. There has been for some time, especially among the more politicised non-governmental organisations in the development field a growing



Images like this show that Africa is not all about pessimism

Photograph: Jean-Marc Bouju

awareness that images of skeletal Africans feed into a stereotype of passivity and powerlessness. Victimhood may rule in the West, but isn't it better in this case to show how people might lift themselves out of it? Television itself devours such imagery, sometimes provoking a response such as Live Aid, sometimes provoking the cynical stories we hear of camera crews rejecting certain children because they are not thin enough to film.

As Short points out, we actually spend fewer TV hours than we did 10 years ago focusing on the developing world, so that the images we see tend

This wasn't "famine". Indeed, what is going on in Sudan is not classified as famine.

There are measures for this kind of thing, apparently. Basically, Short's message is that throwing money at the problem, however well intended, is not enough. The civil war has meant that the underlying difficulty is not one of resources but of access. This is debatable. Some will argue that not enough money has been promised in the first place. Short is taking a long-term view here and one that also makes it difficult for people to know how to respond.

If the problem is the civil war, then

Giving is often the easiest thing to do. Engaging our heads as well as hearts may be too much.

to be ones of acute crisis. This is what Jonathan Dimbleby has called "the media's preoccupation with the horror of mass starvation".

Certainly, as someone who grew up with pictures of Biafra and Ethiopia, I did not recognise malnutrition when it was in front of my eyes because it did not look the way it was supposed to.

When I travelled around the mountains of Bolivia, the children never cried and were not that thin. Everyone always seemed to be eating, though the food had no goodness in it. Girls of 18 looked as though they were 35 and breast-fed their four-year-olds because it kept them quiet. It was only when I asked what the tiny clay pots were in every market that I began to realise something of what was going on. They were to bury alongside the babies so that would have enough food in the next life.

what are we, the citizens of Britain, to do about it? Leave it entirely in the hands of the Government to put political pressure on far-away regimes? This is so abstract compared to the short-term solution of giving money.

However, we need to understand Short's starting point, and again this is not a new one.

While it is easy to be overwhelmed by mass poverty we do in fact know how to reduce it. We know what works. Investment in health and education, particularly in the education of women, helps lift people out of abject poverty. We already know about fair trade, human rights and debt relief. We know that sustainability is not some ecological mumbo-jumbo, but the only way forward for economies of the South to grow. Yet we are dogged by pessimism, a sense that problems will always be there because

they have always been there. Short's recent interventions have been a way of trying to inject some optimism into the whole process, of saying, "Let's generate the political will to do what needs doing".

Short is known for saying sometimes what she should not say and sometimes for saying what has to be said. To talk politics in the face of dying babies may have backfired, but surely her job as a politician is to look at the big picture, not just react to the horrific pictures in a tabloid newspaper?

The debate is really one about what can spur political change.

How do we create the political will to reduce absolute poverty? We can respond when it is already too late and put ourselves on the back for our humanitarian efforts, or we can try to understand the causes of poverty.

Of course, people who work in the field do both. Reporters report, aid agencies run feeding centres, politicians make speeches, and the public remains bewildered even as it weeps over the six o'clock news at so much sorrow.

Short's appeal is simply that we focus a little more on the success stories of development, of those who with great dignity are able to change their lives.

Giving is often the easiest thing to do. Engaging our heads as well as our hearts may be too much to ask. After all, feeling is a lot more fashionable than thinking these days.

But we must ask ourselves some hard questions - otherwise we too become victims of incomprehensible political machinations, in danger of accepting the massive inequalities of the way in which the world is run.

And that truly is a hopeless situation.

The secret fear of BBC bosses - we won't miss their shows



GERALD
KAUFMAN

SOMETHING strange happened to me yesterday morning. I turned on Radio 3 just before 8am and, instead of hearing yet another of the pop tunes by George Gershwin or Leonard Bernstein, which these days substitute for challenging music on the BBC's classical

music channel, I heard - the weather forecast.

Normally, the weather forecast on Radio 3 consists of a few mumbled words, generally in a Jean Brodyesque Scots accent, at the end of the odd disconnected sentences which comprise the Radio 3 news bulletin. But this was a proper weather forecast, with all kinds of technical stuff about drizzle and high winds.

It was, in fact, as I soon learned to my amazement, the Radio 4 weather forecast. Due to industrial action, Radio 4 and Radio 3 were being merged.

Now, to some people, the loss of the full output of not drizzle but drivel on Radio 4 might be regarded as a deprivation, even a bereavement.

The print journalists who

listen to their stories of that morning being regurgitated - generally in three-minute capsules - on the *Today* show or the *World at One* (prior to those journalists then regurgitating the regurgitations in their newspapers' editions the next morning), may feel that interruption of Radio 4's full schedule is snatching their livelihood away from them.

Those denizens of middle England who rely on Radio 4 for their information about the state of the body politic may be rendered tongue-tied during coffee breaks in the common rooms of minor universities. They may even have to think up opinions for themselves.

Alastair Campbell (whom God protect) with one fewer target to rage or snarl at, may

feel a momentary sense of loss.

Politicians allowed to sleep unhindered rather than be roused out of their beds at an idiotically early hour in order to allow themselves to be rendered inarticulate by interruptions from self-important (and self-indulgent) interviewers may suffer withdrawal symptoms.

Who, with "MP" after his or her name, can survive for long without stumbling downstairs, in pyjamas covered by slacks and sweater, to a radio car whose enormous aerial conceals equipment so fallible that, in the end, the interview may have to be conducted over the phone? No, me, chumps. I never, ever listen to *Today* and its clones. I hear enough boring, pointless chit-chat when I reach the House of Commons.

Instead, I read the *New Yorker* over my cornflakes.

The predominant majority of the population do not listen to Radio 4's flagship programmes because they do not even know they exist. Quite a lot of people are unaware that there even is a Radio 4. Some, heaven forbid, may not even be aware of the existence of John Humphrys. Their lives proceed in comparative tranquillity without Radio 4 so much as impinging on their consciousness.

The BBC strike, far from causing inconvenience to most of the public, will not even be noticed by the great mass of the population. That is really why the Broadcasting House bosses are so upset by this industrial action. Their secret fear is that

even more people will get used to doing without the BBC's allegedly indispensable core services, and that the justification for the regretted poll tax known as the licence will diminish further.

As for me, I would like to think that this desirable trend would continue and, indeed, accelerate. Why not merge not only Radio 3 and Radio 4, but Radio 1, Radio 2 and Radio 5 (alive or dead) as well? That would reduce, exponentially, the scope for broadcasting stream-of-consciousness tosh of all kinds. It would cut the BBC down to size. Sounds like a topic worth discussing on the *Today* programme.

The author is Labour MP for Manchester, Gorton.

Badgering on

"Norman Lamont is after my job," according to Tory Euro leader Edward McMillan-Scott, as reported in Wednesday's *Daily Telegraph*. "Not helpful," was the Boy Wonder's response to this accusation. "Not true," was former Tory MP Lamont's riposte.

But what is true is that Lamont would like to become a leading Eurosceptic MP in Strasbourg. The problem is finding somewhere in this country that will elect to send him off to the land of champagne and odd cigarettes.

Pandora has learned that Lamont, whose former seat was Harrogate and Knaresborough in Yorkshire and who claims northern roots, believes who claims northern roots, believes who claims northern roots. A call to the North East is his best bet. A call to the Tory campaign office in the

Pecking order

Yorkshire region produced the news that six out of seven of the Conservative prospective candidates have now been selected. Pandora was told that the candidate in the seventh slot "has little chance of succeeding" in an election that will be based on Proportional Representation. Sounds perfect for Norman.

Stop action

The BBC's fly-on-the-wall series *The Human Body* looks sure to stimulate at least one part of its audience's anatomy: lots of eyeballs will be raised. The climactic episode won't be screened until later in June when the cameras record a dying man's last moments. Pandora was intrigued by the inherent production scheduling

PANDORA

problems. How could the camera crew be sure that they would not miss some of the most controversial footage ever screened on British TV? BBC press officer Susanna Frayn was suspicious when asked to explain. "As if we needed any more publicity," she complained. But she did reveal that the corpse in question, Herbert Mowes, had been a particularly co-operative subject. On the fatal morning, he told his wife that he believed his time had come. The crew were summoned, set up their equipment around his bed and departed, leaving the cameras rolling. Thus was death demystified and with some degree of privacy.

Presley lives

Lisa Marie Presley has just signed a deal to record her first album of songs. The record company is Java Records, in a co-production with Capitol, and is owned by a man, Glen Ballard, who has in the past produced angst queen Alanis Morissette and co-wrote Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror".

"Lisa will make an artistic statement that is unique and compelling," Ballard said in a statement announcing the deal. He must see something everyone else has heretofore missed, for Lisa Marie's former husband, Jacko, pulled every string in his professional quiver trying to obtain a recording contract for her. When you consider a record by Elvis's daughter is sure to sell to fans on novelty value alone, it seems bizarre that her debut has been so long in coming. Can't wait to hear it. Pandora is sure The King would be proud of his princess.

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Everest

FIT THE BEST

Bank under fire over rate shock

City economists and exporters condemn quarter-point rise

By Lea Peterson

THE BANK of England's surprise decision yesterday to increase rates by 0.25 per cent prompted share price falls and drew fire from both industry figures and the bulk of City economists.

The blue-chip FTSE 100 share index fell by 30 points after the Bank raised rates from 7.25 per cent to 7.5 per cent, but regained some of its losses later in the day to close down 37.6 points at 5860.8.

The pound shot up by almost 2 pence immediately following the announcement, but slipped in late trading to finish the day at DM2.898, down 0.45 pence.

The Bank's move coincided with the publication of two separate studies suggesting the economy was continuing to slow.

City economists had been predicting the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - joined for the first time this month by John Vickers, the Bank's new chief economist - would leave interest rates unchanged for the seventh successive month. Most - but not all - City economists were critical of the surprise interest rate hike, saying it could lead to a "hard landing" for the economy.

The Bank justified its decision by evidence of a rise in the rate of private sector earnings as well as the sterling's relative weakness in recent months. In a statement, the Bank said: "Inflationary pressures appear greater than in the May projection, and the need for a slowdown in domestic demand

growth has become more pressing."

Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said: "The MPC confounded market opinion and logic by raising rates this month. It is a rate rise that the Bank could regret in the months ahead if the economy slows sharply."

Mr Briscoe's view was shared by Richard Taylor, deputy chief economist at the Royal Bank of Scotland, who called the rise "unexpected and unnecessary". Mr Taylor said: "The risk of this strategy is that it may rekindle interest in sterling and bring further misery for manufacturing industry."

Ciaran Barr, senior UK economist at Deutsche Bank, was among those in the City who approved. He said: "The justification for raising rates was a valid one." However, Mr Barr said MPC members could have done more to prepare the City for a possibility of a rate rise, perhaps by injecting a more "hawkish" tone into recent public speeches. "Taking the markets by surprise will have won the Bank few friends," commented Mr Barr.

The decision prompted angry reactions from UK manufacturers. The strong pound has tipped manufacturing into recession, and many economists believe yesterday's rate rise will prolong sterling's strength.

Ian Campbell, director general of the Institute of Export, said the rate rise was "a slap in the face for the UK's exporters."

Neither the detailed reasoning behind the Bank's deci-



The Monetary Policy Committee gathers yesterday before deciding to raise rates

THE REACTION

sion nor the voting record of the nine MPC members will be known for another six weeks, when the minutes of the meeting are published. However, this did not stop intense market speculation about the identity of the "hawks" on the committee who voted for a rate rise.

The voting behaviour of John Vickers, who joined the MPC this week, prompted the most comment. Mr Vickers, a former Oxford University professor renowned more for his regulatory expertise than his views on monetary policy, is widely believed to have voted for a rate rise.

Economists at Nikko Europe said: "We would guess that new boy Vickers voted for a rate

rise as chief economist he probably has sympathies with the Bank's economists' concerns about earnings growth and sterling weakness." Speculation also focused on Professor Charles Goodhart, a former hawk who became a dove in April.

In evidence to the Treasury Select Committee last month, Professor Goodhart said he had switched sides because of weaker than expected earnings growth as well as the appreciation of the exchange rate earlier this year.

However, in recent months, the trends on both average earnings - one of the key indicators for the MPC - and exchange rates have been reversed, prompting specula-

tion that Professor Goodhart could have once again sided with the hawks.

Average earnings in January rose 4.5 per cent, far more than expected, although the Office for National Statistics has said at least some of the rise is attributable to one-off effects such as bonus payments.

If both Mr Vickers and Professor Goodhart voted for a rate hike, and assuming the three MPC members who wanted a rate rise in April again sided with the hawks, the MPC would have voted five to four in favour of a rate rise.

Some economists speculated that the minutes of the meeting - due to be published on 15 July - could reveal that as

many as eight of the nine MPC members voted for a rate rise.

One said: "Eddie George may not have been comfortable finding himself in the minority. If he switched to the hawks, the rest of Bank staff may have voted with him." In April, Mr George, Governor of the Bank of England, voted to keep rates on hold, as did David Clementi, deputy governor, Ian Plenderleith, executive director of the Bank, Professor Goodhart and DeAnne Julius, former chief economist at British Airways.

Mervyn King, deputy Bank governor, Sir Alan Budd and Professor Willem Buiter voted to raise rates.

The Bank's decision coincided with the publication of

the latest CBI distributive trades survey and the 31 "Enterprise Barometer".

The CBI survey showed that although growth in annual retail sales volumes held up in May, the underlying trend in sales growth was still relatively weak. Sudhir Junankar, CBI's associate director of economic analysis, said: "The survey suggests that retailers do not expect their prices to pick up any further, which is good news for the inflation outlook."

The survey by 31, the venture capital group, showed falling confidence in the independent business sector, with manufacturers more gloomy than providers of services.

Outlook, page 23

1,500 more go at Pilkington

By Peter Thal Larsen

PILKINGTON, the troubled glass-maker, plans to sack another 1,500 workers in the coming 12 months in an attempt to restore its fortunes.

The move will take the total number of jobs lost as part of the restructuring package, announced last autumn to 7,500. About 400 jobs will be lost in Australia while the rest will fall in Europe, Paolo Scaroni, Pilkington's chief executive, said yesterday.

He said the move would help reduce costs in the group's float glass manufacturing plants, lifting productivity levels to those of its nearest competitors.

"If you are not competitive in float you die," Mr Scaroni said, pointing out that the planned cuts would lift Pilkington's productivity per worker. "If we can achieve that we will be as good as our competitors. We will be in the pack."

He said that the company had already shed 3,500 of its workforce as part of plans it announced last autumn. The remainder of the jobs will go in the coming year.

The additional cuts raised the amount that Pilkington had to set aside for restructuring from £194m to £225m. The



Paolo Scaroni says the cuts will lift productivity

charge, which covers the cost of all the planned job losses, pulled the group into the red last year. It posted a pre-tax loss of £100m in the year to March, compared to a profit of £77m in the previous year.

Pilkington held its full-year dividend at 5p per share. However, the shares slipped 7p to 135.5p.

Mr Scaroni said his plans would increase Pilkington's productivity in float glass manufacturing by 40 per cent, while lifting efficiency in automotive glass by 22 per cent. He said the group had already achieved half of those gains.

Despite the cutbacks, the company is still investing in new plants. It is building new lines in Spain, Belgium, Poland and Egypt.

Railtrack demands charges deal to finish Tunnel link

By Michael Harrison

RAILTRACK dropped a bombshell on the Government yesterday by warning that it was unlikely to build both phases of the £5.5bn Channel Tunnel Rail Link if the forthcoming review of its rail access charges proved too harsh.

The warning came just 24 hours after the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, struck an agreement with Railtrack to rescue the 68-mile link and cast fresh doubt on whether construction of the line all the way into London's St Pancras station would be completed.

Railtrack has agreed to build and then acquire the first

phase of the link to Fawkham Junction in Kent for £1.5bn. But its chief executive Gerald Corbett said the option to complete the second stage into London at a cost of £1.8bn would be contingent on the outcome of the regulatory review into its charging formula from 2001 onwards.

Mr Corbett denied that this was tantamount to blackmailing the Government and the Rail Regulator John Swift. "It is not blackmail at all. It is prudent financial management," he said.

Railtrack's financial director, Norman Broadhurst, added that if the Rail Regulator "decided to do a British Gas

on us" then it would have to relinquish the second phase and concentrate on its core business.

Failure to build the second phase would be a severe blow as it would limit the saving on journey times to just 15 minutes and rob the Government of all the added economic benefits that a completed link would provide.

Under Railtrack's current pricing formula, the charges it levies on train operating companies for access to the rail network must fall by 2 per cent a year in real terms. Railtrack has easily met this target while making increased profits. Last

year profits rose 12 per cent to £388m on access charges of £2.1bn.

Railtrack will argue that the forthcoming review of charges, covering a five-year period from 2001, must not be any harsher or it will not be able to afford its investment programme, now £1.45bn a year.

Railtrack's access charges from Eurostar services are currently running at £35m a year but they will rise to about £120m a year when the first phase of the high-speed link enters service in 2003 and to about £330m once the line is complete into central London.

Outlook, page 23

BTG plans £400m float for car transmission unit

By Trevor Webster

BTG, which was privatised in 1995 to develop and market new technologies as a quoted company, is planning to unlock a significant part of its future value for shareholders by demerging and floating off its most valuable business, Torotrak, on the stock market this summer.

Torotrak is likely to be valued around £400m on the strength of its revolutionary new automatic car transmission system, which can cut fuel consumption by 20 per cent and make a serious impact on exhaust emissions. It has already been licensed to seven of the world's biggest vehicle manufacturers, including Toyota and Ford, and also has five development contracts.

Together the 12 agreements cover 40 per cent of world production of transmission units.

With BTG's stock market value around £645m and City analysts estimating Torotrak to be around 55 per cent of the total business, news of the float immediately unlocked some value for shareholders yesterday. BTG shares shot up 33.5p to 736p.

BTG shareholders will receive one Torotrak share for each share they hold in the parent company and the group will simultaneously raise £50m through an issue of new shares to allow Torotrak to carry its development to the production stage by the year 2000, and hopefully to profitability around 2003.

BTG will keep a share of under 10 per cent, comprising a share stake and a share of future revenues.

Torotrak's board has already been beefed up with a new board headed by ex-General Motors executive David Wallis as chairman, with a finance director, product engineering director and three non-executives. The demerger documents will be published in a fortnight's time and share dealings in Torotrak should start on 14 July.

News of the Torotrak floatation came as BTG published results for the year to March showing a rise in losses from £2.7m to £9m, due to lower revenues from its magnetic resonance imaging system and the Pyrethrin insecticide, plus increased development spending on Torotrak.

Investment column, page 24

EU pressed to investigate Eurostar

By Michael Harrison

THE consortium selected by the Government to take over Eurostar services to Paris and Brussels faces an anti-trust investigation by European Commission competition authorities.

EasyJet, the low-cost airline, is set to file a complaint alleging that the consortium, headed by British Airways and the coach group National Express, will unfairly dominate the travel market between

London, Paris and Brussels.

"Allowing British Airways to run Eurostar is like putting Herod in charge of a kindergarten," EasyJet said in a statement yesterday.

Virgin claims that BA and National Express will have an "economic interest" in 90 per cent of the market, which is estimated at 15 million passengers a year. BA is the biggest single airline operator between London and Paris with an estimated 40 per cent of the market,

while National Express is the prime operator of coach services to Paris and Brussels.

A Virgin spokesman said it was still considering whether to join EasyJet in making a formal complaint to the European Competition Commissioner Karel Van Miert. He added that Brussels would be duty-bound to examine the deal anyway.

National Express will initially have a 40 per cent stake in the Eurostar operation and BA a 10 per cent interest. The

French and Belgian railways, SNCF and SNCB, would have the other 50 per cent. But BA's stake would rise to 35 per cent once it has regulatory approval.

The consortium said that it would seek to integrate Eurostar with coach, bus and airline services. Virgin alleges this could result in unfair pricing.

European Commission officials were cautious about whether the selection of the Eurostar consortium would harm fair competition.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5860.80	-37.80	-0.64	6150.50	4382.80	3.88
FTSE 250	5921.80	1.20	0.02	5920.90	4384.20	3.01
FTSE 350	2882.50	-14.70	-0.51	2938.70	2141.80	3.79
FTSE All Share	2800.01	-13.57	-0.48	2881.12	2106.59	3.74
FTSE Smallcap	2767.30	-1.80	-0.07	2783.80	2182.10	2.96
FTSE 1000	1805.50	-0.40	-0.02	1811.00	1225.20	3.00
FTSE AIM	1139.40	1.60	0.14	1138.50	965.90	1.05
FTSE EURO 100	1040.36					
Dow Jones	9608.76	-2.74	-0.03	9261.31	6971.32	1.62
Nikkei	15426.47	79.47	0.52	20910.79	14488.21	0.99
Hong Kong	8556.43	-260.79	-2.98	16820.31	7908.13	4.82
S&P 500	5582.48	-21.28	-0.38	5664.24	3467.24	2.85

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 months 1 yr 2 yr 3 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 2 yr 3 yr 5 yr 10 yr	1 yr 2 yr 3 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.50 7.00 6.50 6.00 5.50 5.00	5.77 5.77 5.77 5.77 5.77 5.77	5.77 5.77 5.77 5.77 5.77 5.77
US 5.00 4.50 4.00 3.50 3.00 2.50	5.50 5.50 5.50 5.50 5.50 5.50	5.50 5.50 5.50 5.50 5.50 5.50
Japan 0.55 0.05 0.05 0.05 0.05 0.05	1.44 1.44 1.44 1.44 1.44 1.44	1.44 1.44 1.44 1.44 1.44 1.44
Germany 3.50 3.00 2.50 2.00 1.50 1.00	4.97 4.97 4.97 4.97 4.97 4.97	4.97 4.97 4.97 4.97 4.97 4.97

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
at 3pm	at 3pm	at 3pm
Dollar 1.6388 +0.0130 1.6307	Sterling 0.8098 -0.0050 0.8148	Yen 175.90 -0.7400 1.7316
D-Mark 2.8835 -1.2700 2.8184	D-Mark 1.7540 -0.7400 1.7316	Yen 138.38 +0.0030 118.38
Yen 226.80 +0.0010 190.13	Yen 138.38 +0.0030 118.38	Yen 111.20 +0.00 102.90
£ index 103.60 +0.00 99.60	£ index 111.20 +0.00 102.90	£ index 111.20 +0.00 102.90

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5867	Malta (lira)	0.6172
Austria (schillings)	19.71	Mexican (nuevo peso)	13.10
Belgium (francs)	57.83	Netherlands (guilders)	3.1598
Canada (\$)	2.3190	New Zealand (\$)	2.9910
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8228	Norway (krone)	11.85
Denmark (krone)	10.75	Portugal (escudos)	284.42
Finland (markka)	8.5828	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9844
France (francs)	8.4020	Singapore (\$)	2.6208
Germany (marks)	2.6169	Spain (pesetas)	237.63
Greece (drachmas)	477.28	South Africa (rand)	6.0485
Hong Kong (\$)	12.29	Sweden (krona)	12.36
Ireland (pounds)	1.1094	Switzerland (francs)	2.3509
India (rupees)	62.85	Thailand (bahts)	63.41
Israel (shekels)	5.5250	Turkey (liras)	407.172
Italy (lira)	2776	USA (\$)	1.5689
Japan (yen)	221.84		
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.1372		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

هذا من الأصل

Offer Ends 9th June

Coverage of Princess's death boosts Daily Mail group

A RUNNING series on Diana, Princess of Wales, provided a one-off boost to the circulation of the *Daily Mail* earlier this year, the paper's owner said yesterday. Daily Mail & General Trust said that a 12-part series on Diana, written by the former royal correspondent Richard Kay, had lifted sales of the *Mail*'s Saturday edition by as much as 500,000 copies while it was running. This helped DMGT's national and regional newspaper operations report an 11 per cent jump in turnover to £485m for the year to March. Group turnover was £658m, up from £546m, while pre-tax profits jumped 24 per cent to £81.1m.

ITNET valued at £246m

INFORMATION technology supplier ITNET will be valued at £246m when its shares are placed on the stock market shortly at 350p each. Dealings are expected to start next Friday, 12 June. The pricing of the shares at 350p means the former in-house IT provider of Cadbury Schweppes will raise £125.8m from its placing of 35.9 million shares. It will keep £28.6m to repay debts and provide funds for investment. ITNET boosted its operating profits from £4.86m to £5.95m in 1997 on a turnover of £81.7m against £68.7m previously.

Credit warning over EMU

A LEADING credit rating agency has warned it could downgrade Belgium and Italy's sovereign debt rating over fears that European Monetary Union (EMU) could precipitate a financial crisis in high debt economies. Fitch IBCA said EMU participants with relatively low debt levels could benefit from a "flight to quality" once all participating Member States are obliged to issue bonds in euros. Bond issues by relatively high debt economies, such as Belgium and Italy, could become less attractive to investors, and this, in turn, "would increase the risks of a financial crisis", the agency said.

Bellwinch agrees bid

BELLWINCH, the South of England housebuilder, has agreed a 30p-a-share bid from rival housebuilder, Kier, which values it at £13.5m. Earlier this week Kier acquired a 23.6 per cent stake in Bellwinch and said it was considering making an offer for the whole company. It has now received undertakings to accept its offer from holders of an additional 37.3 per cent of Bellwinch shares. Kier says the acquisition should be positive for earnings.

US delay for ICI sale

ICI's £277m sale of its Crosfield business to WR Grace, which was announced in April, will be delayed until the third quarter of this year after a request for further information from the US Federal Trade Commission. Both ICI and Grace are confident the deal will be completed.

Vaux responds to bid approach

By Clifford German

THE THREAT of further brewery closures loomed yesterday after Vaux, the Sunderland-based brewer and owner of the Swallow hotel chain, confirmed an unsolicited approach from an unidentified company looking to make an agreed bid. Its chairman, Sir John Nicholson, repeated his belief in the group's potential and prospects and asked the company's financial advisers, Noble Grossart, to seek further details.

But the group is considered vulnerable to a hostile bid. The recently appointed chief executive Martin Grant has yet to join the group and the shares, which have underperformed the stock market heavily over the last two years jumped 45p to 346.5p.

The most likely bidders are thought to be Stakis and American Patriot, and the main target is almost certainly the hotels, which have performed strongly, increasing profits by 14 per cent to £12.1m in the six months to 31 March, and contributed 75 per cent of the group total.

The brewing and pub side of the business has been badly squeezed by the heavy investment by the national brewery chains and the fast-growing pub companies, and could be vulnerable in the event of a break-up. Vaux owns the Ward brewery in Sheffield as well as the Vaux brewery in Sunderland and has a tied estate of 843 pubs, of which 178 are managed.



JOHN YOUNG, chairman of the London brewer Young & Co, toasts a 27 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £6m before reorganisation costs and property sales in the year to 28 March. Turnover rose 3.6 per cent to £78.56m. The dividend is up 5.6 per cent to 16.05p.

Springer eyes UK market

By Peter Thal Larsen

AXEL SPRINGER, the German newspaper publisher which is lining up a bid for Mirror Group, said yesterday that the UK was the most attractive newspaper market in the world.

"The British newspaper market is the best in Europe, if not in the world," Springer's chief executive, Gus Fischer, said. "I do not want to be the last to go there."

Meanwhile, the group confirmed that it has the financial muscle to launch a bid for Mirror Group by reporting that it was

debt-free. Revealing its results for 1997, Springer pointed out that it had liquid assets of DM686m (£237m), while its long-term debt stands at DM246m. Cash flow also improved last year.

Mr Fischer said it was essential for Springer's newspaper and magazine business to become more international. The group, which publishes the daily newspapers *Die Welt* and *Bild* plus a host of regional newspapers and consumer magazines, currently generates just 13 per cent of its turnover from outside Germany. Two weeks ago Springer stated it was consid-

Hardy prepares to raise £80m

By Terry Macalister

HARDY Oil & Gas yesterday unveiled plans to raise £80m via a rights issue but admitted that plans to spend some of the cash in Pakistan could be hit by sanctions.

Hardy will use the new money to support a £300m spending programme over the next five years, of which £60m is earmarked for Pakistan.

But nuclear testing by the Islamabad government has led the US to impose a moratorium on multilateral aid. "So far none of our business there is covered by sanctions but obviously if the embargo broadens it could affect our investment," said John van der Welle, finance director. Analysts also expressed fears

about how quickly the Pakistan schemes could move ahead. "There are no US partners with Hardy but it could be hard to find banks willing to support such projects," said one.

The small independent has made an exciting gas find on the Sawan concession in Pakistan. It indicated there could be as much as one to two trillion cubic feet of gas there.

The investment programme is split between Pakistan, Australia and the UK North Sea. Off Britain, Hardy is busy with the development of the Elgin and Franklin fields.

The company is hoping to build up further field opportunities by forming a new joint venture with the US offshore services giant Halliburton. The

two partners plan to deploy a new form of subsea technology, called AlphaPRIME, which, it is said, could cut costs by as much as \$3 per barrel.

But its choice of Halliburton Energy Development as a partner could prove controversial. The US company has worried some clients by competing for oil company business. Halliburton has taken equity stakes in the Sangu field alongside Cairn Energy and the Fyne field with Montem Oil & Gas. This has led to accusations that it is competing with customers.

A spokesman for Halliburton admitted he was "aware of this argument" and agreed his company might increase its equity stakes yet further through the joint venture with Hardy.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Aspen Group (F)	92.1m (88.1m)	6.92m (6.88m)	18.2p (17.4p)	7.30p (6.4p)
Boots (F)	5.02m (4.57m)	491.8m (571.1m)	29.0p (42.8p)	22.2p (20.5p)
BTG (F)	19.2m (22.5m)	-8.98m (-2.73m)	-10.5p (-3.31p)	0.50p (0.88p)
Daily Mail & Gen. Trust (F)	485.7m (445.0m)	61.1m (55.8m)	46.2p (27.8p)	8.0p (7.0p)
Halliburton (F)	214.4m (190.5m)	18.5m (12.03m)	55.6p (31.6p)	9.0p (8.0p)
London Securities (F)	- (-)	0.730m (0.738m)	0.5p (1.0p)	2.0p (2.0p)
Landstar (F)	34.4m (26.1m)	4.9m (3.7m)	18.4p (16.3p)	7.3p (7.0p)
Woolston (F)	16.0m (12.8m)	-11.85m (-7.18m)	-42.2p (-36.9p)	nil
Woolston (F)	10.8m (25.5m)	-0.960m (-0.373m)	-8.5p (-4.1p)	nil
Personal Finance Co. (F)	2.8m (2.7m)	-0.304m (-0.334m)	-1.90p (-10.0p)	nil
Pittman (F)	2.70m (2.91m)	-100.0m (77.0m)	-17.4p (0.2p)	5.0p (5.0p)
Powell Duffryn (F)	721.2m (821.4m)	35.1m (29.8m)	32.1p (15.3p)	25.0p (25.0p)
Schlegelm (F)	67.8m (59.7m)	12.3m (8.13m)	5.4p (3.3p)	1.5p (2.0p)
Solihull (F)	39.4m (34.8m)	-5.58m (-1.01m)	-8.9p (1.5p)	0.20p (0.1p)
Southern Electric (F)	1.77m (1.76m)	248.7m (255.5m)	5.1p (58.1p)	23.7p (21.5p)
3i (F)	- (-)	124.0m (105.8m)	19.2p (16.0p)	10.3p (8.2p)
T.G. (F)	302.9m (383.9m)	24.8m (22.1m)	8.8p (8.0p)	4.6p (4.3p)
Young & Co's Brewery (F)	78.55m (75.8m)	5.881m (5.424m)	30.51p (28.96p)	18.05p (15.20p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim † EPS is pre-exceptionals * Dividend to be paid as FD

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HEWLETT-PACKARD

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

Boots card proves a major advantage

IT IS slightly curious that Boots got so much praise yesterday for the success of its loyalty card. After all, Lord Blyth, Boots' chairman, sat on the fence for ages, while other retailers showed what a piece of plastic could do for their turnover, before finally taking the plunge last September. Judging by the boost the Advantage card delivered to sales for the year to March, it's worth asking why Boots didn't get it on the market earlier.

This criticism aside, there's little doubt that the Advantage card has paid off. In just nine months Boots has issued 8 million of the cards, and over the year to March they accounted for 1.8 per cent of the growth in counter sales at Boots the Chemists. Apart from the profit that the card is generating, Boots also gets a wealth of information on spending patterns that it didn't have before.

The chemists chain remains the jewel in Boots' crown, producing like-for-like sales of more than 5 per cent. The Opticians branches, though a relatively small part of the group, stormed ahead with same store sales rising by a fifth. So it's not surprising to hear that the group is increasing its spending on the Opticians chains, while opening a further 30 superstores this year.

In other retail formats, however, success remains as elusive as ever. Halfords lifted like-for-like sales by just 3 per cent, although selling more own-brand goods helped boost profits by 28 per cent. Trading at DIY chain Do It All continued to be dull, with underlying sales up 6 per cent on a same-store basis. Ironically, the loyalty card has failed to catch on here and has been withdrawn.

Boots was keeping mum on reports that financial investors want to buy Do It All, though it would undoubtedly like to sell. However, Boots' growth - and its share price - will continue to depend on the performance of the chemists chain. On profit forecasts of £620m the shares, up 28.5p to 984p yesterday, trade on a forward multiple of 21. Still good value.

3i seeks high return from small firms

VENTURE capital group 3i has had a good run ever since it floated back in 1994. That's no surprise: the group's unique portfolio of quoted and unquoted companies has produced a compound annual return of 23 per cent over the period. In the year to last March the total return was 22.4 per cent on shareholders' funds - an increase of 56 per cent on the previous year. Total assets rose by 19 per cent to £5.23bn and 3i invested over £1bn for the first time, increasing its UK market share.

That said, more capital is chasing buy-out opportunities, while the UK economy faces a slow-down. Even 3i's own barometer of industrial confidence went negative yesterday, raising the question of whether the group can sustain its performance.

It hopes to do so by concentrating on smaller companies, which have outperformed the top 100 shares since February. It is also focusing on services and technology firms where the prospects look better.

The outlook in Continental Europe, where

Boots: At a glance

Market value: £8.87bn, share price 984p (+28.5p)

Trading record 94 95 96 97 98

Turnover 4.17 4.31 4.12 4.58 5.02

Pre-tax profits 416 850 508 571 432

Earnings per share 27.7 55.7 35.8 42.9 29.0

Dividends per share 15.0 17.0 18.5 20.5 22.3

Share price

1000

800

600

400

1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998

Source: Datastream

3i invests more than 10 per cent of its funds, also looks bright.

The pace of new investment seems to have slowed slightly since the year-end but the performance of quoted companies since then suggests net asset value may have risen to around 615p. At 655p - up 5p yesterday - 3i shares are above that value. But stockbrokers Kleinwort Benson say the company deserves a premium as a manager of £1.3bn of outside money in addition to its own funds. The shares are a strong hold.

Inventive demerger

gives BTG a lift

IN DECIDING to spin off Torotrak, its revolutionary transmission system, BTG is following a highly profitable tradition. Previously, privatised companies as diverse as National Grid and British Aerospace have done wonders for shareholders by demerging promising, but separate, businesses on to the stock market.

Torotrak highlights the value BTG can squeeze out of technologies. A business on which the group has spent £12m over 10 years will float with a value of close to £400m after raising £50m of new money. Given that the system is already being worked on by 12 of the world's leading car makers, there is plenty of future promise for shareholders.

But what is the rest of BTG worth? It will be left with more than 1,000 other technologies or inventions, including a host of biotech treatments already on the books of drug giants such as SmithKline and Zeneca. Not to mention a revolutionary artificial hip-cup, disposable contact lenses and an electronic bar-coding system. New revenue is rocketing and BTG should make a profit early in the next century.

Still, valuing this collection of inventions is tough. Kleinwort Benson, BTG's broker, reckons the existing portfolio is worth anything from £300m to £720m, and Torotrak accounts for 55 per cent of the total. It is a wide range, but as yesterday's 34p share-price rise to 736.5p suggested, the demerger lifts the probable value of the portfolio. And the shares still look a better bet than other biotech and "future value" companies. Hold tight for the next millennium.

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Market takes the base rate rise in its stride

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

IT WAS as if the base rate increase had been expected. The stock market took the shock uplift in its stride, deciding it was not such an unexpected move after all, and then enjoyed pouring cold water on all the tawdry produced by the highly paid economists which, to a man, had steadfastly asserted rates would be pegged at yesterday's Monetary Policy Committee meeting.

At one time Footsie was down 77.6 points. It ended off a mere 37.6 at 5,860.8 with the modest base rate uplift largely ignored. Supporting shares were mixed although the mid cap index managed to produce a modest gain. Probably the worst hit were Government stocks, off by around a point. Railtrack, perhaps the most unpopular Tory share flotation, had another express run. The shares jumped 74p to 1.348p, a peak as the stock market warmed to its rail link deal and prospect upgrades

went the rounds with a CSFB prediction of a 1,630p target creating the greatest impact. Halifax, off 17p to 840p, had a difficult session. ABN Amro, the Dutch owned investment group, repeated its sell advice. ABN's Robin Down said a fair value was around 700p a share. He is worried about the mortgage competition and has cut his 1990 forecast by more than £100m to £1.77bn.

Carlton Communications jumped 15p to 510p on Merrill Lynch support and a US road show. Engineer Siebe firmed to 1.342p as Salomon Smith Barney talked about the price reaching 1,650p.

Vaux, the Sunderland-based brewer and hotelier, was a major feature after it revealed a bid approach. Its Swallow bottles spread is thought to be the asset interesting the predator, possibly Stakis, down 2p to 135p. American Patriot, the group which acquired the Arcadian

International hotel chain, is regarded as another possible predatory candidate. Storehouse, following the Henderson Crosthwaite investment dinner, rose 5.5p to 280p, a 12-month high. Kingfisher, enjoying the HC treatment last night, fell 13p to 1,067p.

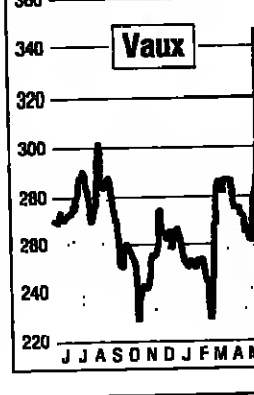
Belwinch, the house builder, was unchanged at 28.5p as construction group Keir, with 23.6 per cent, decided not to dilute and bid, it is offering 30p a share, pricing the group at £13.5m.

Hardy Oil & Gas is tapping shareholders for £79.1m and fell 15p to 246.5p. Martin International, a clothing group seeking £5.5m, lost 3p to 40p.

Wiggins, the property developer with airport ambitions, hardened 1p to 14.7p after raising £1.45m through a placing which seems to have enlisted American William McCabe, who appears to be intent on furthering Wiggins' airport ambitions.

Share Spotlight

share price, pence



52 week

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Shahid takes his chance to shine

Cricket

By David Llewellyn
at The Oval

Surrey 502-7 dec
Worcestershire 104-2

IT HAS been a threadbare couple of years for Nadeem Shahid. Two years without a big

score. Two years with very few opportunities to show what he is capable of. And he is capable of much as he revealed with the sixth century of his first-class career when Surrey piled up 500 for only the fourth time against these opponents.

Shahid, who joined Surrey from Essex for the 1995 season, has had to bide his time. In a

squad with batting riches, there is, of necessity, a pecking order.

When the England men are back there is little room for the likes of Shahid, Jason Ratcliffe et al. He played in only seven Championship matches last summer, although this year, for one reason or another, is a little better. And so far he has made the most of them.

Shahid is blessed with natural timing and a variety of shots which he used to stitch together a vivid 124, containing 21 boundaries. There were hundred partnerships with Alistair Brown, who maintained his form with a 72, and Ben Hollis, who rediscovered his touch with 51. It all helped in creating a satisfyingly plump cushion from which the bowlers could then attack at will.

They did try, and Worcestershire did lose a couple of wickets, including the promising Abdul Hafeez (33) after a 67-run stand for the second wicket with Graeme Hick. But the initial overs of the Worcestershire innings also saw a wayward Alex Tudor in particular threatening to unspool everyone else's careful handwork. The fast bowler Tudor sent down six no balls in his opening spell of five overs. And after he came off the in-form Hick moved solidly towards yet another high score, his appetite for runs clearly undiminished by his recent achievement of scoring his hundredth first-class hundred.

By the close Hick had ensured that substantial progress had been made towards the 353 runs needed to avoid the follow-on and was himself sitting comfortably on an unbeaten 40 with his side still 398 adrift of Surrey.

Hooper shows his wayward side as Kent take it slow

By John Collis
at Tunbridge Wells

Sussex 189 & 46-0
Kent 211

ON A day when for white-knuckle excitement the cricket competed with the Ladies' Hat competition, Kent laboriously took first innings advantage on a low, slow wicket. Had this not been Tunbridge Wells, where the demeanour of the crowd suits the tranquil beauty of the ground, the cricket might have followed its dogged course against a wall of barking.

Yet this gritty contest remains intriguing. Weather permitting an important result will come from what has so far been a tight battle between two sides high in the table - Sussex began the match in second place, Kent in fifth. And there is always interest in watching young players, or those who must fight for a first team place, working hard to secure their future. In this respect, Kent's 19-year-old opener Robert Key, and the stocky Matthew Walk-

er, who has also opened the innings in the past, did themselves justice in nursing the home side to what was only their fifth batting point of the season, the other four being donated by Durham.

However, those who saw Carl Hooper's sublime innings of 94 at The Oval on Saturday were now witness to his other side. When graft was required, he wafted an off-side three, drove Mark Robinson back over the bowler's head and then departed, bow attempting an absent-minded smear towards mid-wicket.

Sussex, having only reached 189 on Wednesday needed their bowlers to apply themselves yesterday, and this they did. Jason Levy was the most threatening and Keith Newell was economical, while Robinson took the big wickets of Hooper and Alan Wells.

Kent's stubborn tail delayed tea until 5 o'clock, and the second innings got under way late on a long day. By stumps, Sussex were beginning to set their target.

Windows shines in his father's image

By Mike Carey
at Chesterfield

Gloucestershire 329-5
v Derbyshire

BEFORE a ball was bowled this season both these sides would have eyed this fixture and marked it as one that could be won. Whether either can do it now, with a day lost to rain and on a pitch devoid of life, remains to be seen, but what is certain is that Gloucestershire would have emerged from yesterday's events with most satisfaction.

Despite one or two mislapses,

they made the most of winning the toss and of some Derbyshire bowling that was, to put it mildly, unexceptional. In these circumstances an attack consisting of five seam bowlers and one off-spinner is not the best balance, and it bowed.

Some counties would have made Derbyshire pay even more for their variations. As it was Tim Hancock would have been mortified to get out to Kim Barnett, albeit very tight with his medium pace, six short of his first 100 of the season after doing all the hard work when the new ball was moving about.

Later in the day Matthew Windows took a heavy toll of a disillusioned attack with some vigorous back-foot strokes, which were - dare one admit it - highly reminiscent of his father. He was left unbeaten one short of the fourth century of a promising career, having faced 181 balls and hit 14 fours. He and the well-organised Dominic Henson added 150 together for the fifth wicket in 51 overs.

If Gloucestershire subscribe to the widely held local view that this grassless pitch will turn, they will no doubt bat on this morning. They may well do so any-

way if they believe in the old adage that you make your runs while the going is favourable.

Before that, the new ball did enough to suggest that batting ought to have been much harder. The trouble was Derbyshire scarcely put two successive balls in the right place.

Elsewhere, there were too many half-volleys, long hops and, for that matter no-balls. Maybe in desperation the acting captain Karl Kricken turned to Barnett who demonstrated that medium pace bowling, just short of a length could frustrate batsmen on this pitch.

Wells makes up for lost time

LEICESTERSHIRE'S Vince Wells produced the batting performance of the day to ensure his team made up for lost time against Yorkshire at Headingley after their first-day washout.

Opener Wells finished just six short of his 150, having brought up his hundred in 161 balls with 13 fours and a six, to

help Leicestershire towards 353 for 9 declared.

Hampshire's captain Robin Smith, scoring 84, led his team close to first innings parity against Glamorgan. Adrian Aynnes and Paul Whitaker added 84 in an unbeaten partnership that took their team to 247 for 5, just 22 runs behind.



Robin Smith hits out on his way to 84 for Hampshire yesterday

Photograph: Allsport

Rough days a pleasure for Montgomerie

Golf

By Andy Farrell
at Hanbury Manor

COLIN MONTGOMERIE proves himself the exception to most rules, and his reaction when his opening drive from the 10th tee found the rough, once again showed he is a breed apart. While for most mortals the reaction would have been: "Ob no, here we go again", for Montgomerie it was just: "Yippee, here we go."

Monty had only just pulled his shot off the fairway but could hardly find the ball. His only course of action having done so was to chip back on to the fairway. This, contrary to what you would expect, put the Scot in carnival mood and he capitalised to the extent of an opening 64.

Having not got on to the course when the pro-am was cancelled on Wednesday, Montgomerie had not seen the layout since a year ago and so only now appreciated what a lot of fertiliser, a wet April and a warm May can produce in the way of long-stemmed grass.

"I was actually rejuvenated by seeing how difficult the rough was because that plays into my hands. It favours me," Montgomerie said. "Other people were going to be tentative and I get confident from other people not being confident."

Of course, it helped that Montgomerie holed a putt from 20 feet for his par. He then holed from eight feet, 20 and 20 again for birdies at the next three holes. Hardly a day goes by without Monty moaning about his putting but this was an exception. Excluding the one at his last hole which was from the fringe but was another important par-saver when a double-bogey seven looked likely, the official statistics showed Montgomerie took only 24 putts. "That's encouraging, well below average," he beamed. Five putts below average, to be exact.

His eight-under-par effort, his lowest of the season, was one

outside the course record and gave him a one-stroke lead over France's Nicolas Joakimides, while Belgium's Nicolas Vanhootegem, after missing 10 cuts in 11 events so far this season, was among those on six-under. The pair are sharing a hotel room this week. "There must be magic in the room," Joakimides said.

"I really do wish that a lot of our courses were set up in this manner," Monty added. "It is fantastic to see that you're punished for a bad shot. We'd all be better players for playing courses of this strictness more often."

Not everyone agreed, particularly Lee Westwood, who along with Darren Clarke narrowly lost out to Montgomerie as Golfer of the Month for May. Westwood pointed out that while the rough just off the fairway, where he could himself en route to a double bogey at the eighth, had been cultivated, 20 yards further away it had not been. "If the rough is going to be long, it should be long everywhere," Westwood, who went to the turn in 38 to be 10 shots off the lead, said. "Then I decided to concentrate on hitting the fairway." This proved more fruitful as the 25-year-old came home in 30, with four birdies and an eagle at the 17th, to tie four off the lead.

Westwood and Clarke will today take part in a special clinic as part of the Golf Foundation's Starter Centre Initiative to find future stars. Launched in March, over 200 centres have already been set up with 20,000 juniors enrolled. So successful has the project been that further funding is required and members of every club in the country are to be asked for a £1 donation.

THE ENGLISH OPEN (Hanbury Manor) Leading first-round scores (GB unless stated): 64: C Montgomerie; 65: N Joakimides (F); 66: N Vanhootegem (Bel); 67: L Westwood (W); 68: A Clarke (I); 69: D Clarke (I); 70: D Clarke (I); 71: D Clarke (I); 72: D Clarke (I); 73: D Clarke (I); 74: D Clarke (I); 75: D Clarke (I); 76: D Clarke (I); 77: D Clarke (I); 78: D Clarke (I); 79: D Clarke (I); 80: D Clarke (I); 81: D Clarke (I); 82: D Clarke (I); 83: D Clarke (I); 84: D Clarke (I); 85: D Clarke (I); 86: D Clarke (I); 87: D Clarke (I); 88: D Clarke (I); 89: D Clarke (I); 90: D Clarke (I); 91: D Clarke (I); 92: D Clarke (I); 93: D Clarke (I); 94: D Clarke (I); 95: D Clarke (I); 96: D Clarke (I); 97: D Clarke (I); 98: D Clarke (I); 99: D Clarke (I); 100: D Clarke (I); 101: D Clarke (I); 102: D Clarke (I); 103: D Clarke (I); 104: D Clarke (I); 105: D Clarke (I); 106: D Clarke (I); 107: D Clarke (I); 108: D Clarke (I); 109: D Clarke (I); 110: D Clarke (I); 111: D Clarke (I); 112: D Clarke (I); 113: D Clarke (I); 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Schofield is hoping for 'home' win

Bergkamp may miss first game

By Ian Davies

THE Netherlands coach, Guus Hiddink, has admitted that Dennis Bergkamp may not be fit in time for his side's opening World Cup game against Belgium a week on Saturday.

Bergkamp has been out with a hamstring injury since the middle of May, but Hiddink had been hoping the Arsenal striker would be ready to start the Group E match at the Stade de France. "Time is running out for Dennis," admitted Hiddink as his side prepared for their final warm-up match against Nigeria today.

Hiddink will want to test the fitness of PSV Eindhoven's central midfielder Wim Jonk in that game. Jonk has been suffering from a groin injury and, if he is not fit, Hiddink seems certain to favour the right-footed Aron Winter as a partner for Phillip Cocu instead of the left-footed Edgar Davids.

The German trainer Bert Vogts is to watch captain Jürgen Klinsmann's performance closely in their final World Cup warm-up match against Luxembourg at Mannheim today. He said: "I want to see Jürgen play for 90 minutes, now that he's fit again and played for 20 minutes against Colombia."

The German side go into the game in high spirits, following their convincing 3-1 win against Colombia last weekend. The game against Luxembourg, who have not qualified for the World Cup finals, would be a "nice

run-in for France", added Vogts, who will also be keenly monitoring Bayern Munich's captain Thomas Helmer in training. Vogts said he did not want to risk another injury to Helmer, who has only just returned after a thigh injury.

Vogts said: "I got the green light from the team doctor to play Thomas for one half. He is a very important player, with influence and standing, and I think he is a crucial player for our team." He added he would use the opportunity to try out other players, including wing-back Joerg Heinrich, who disappointed in a recent friendly against Finland.

The Brazilian striker Romario returned home on Wednesday after being dropped from the Brazilian World Cup squad because of an injured right calf. "I went to France full of happiness and surrounded by friends," Romario said shortly after arriving at Rio de Janeiro's international airport. "I return alone and full of sadness. My dream of helping Brazil win its fifth World Cup was shattered. There was a lack of patience. I know how my body functions and I know I would have the physical conditions to play."

Romario said he will have recovered in 15 days and expects to resume playing for Rio's Flamengo. Some fans cried when they saw Romario. Others shouted invective against Zico, the team's coordinator whom they said was responsible for Romario's exclusion.



Bryan Robson scores the fastest goal in World Cup history - 27 seconds - as England get off to the perfect start in the 1982 finals with a 3-1 win against France

Photograph: AP

A flying start but a frustrating finish

In 1982 England played in their first World Cup for 12 years but their return to the top ended in disappointment. Ken Jones reports

 ENGLAND AT THE WORLD CUP 1982 Spain	
GROUP A England 3 France 1 England 2 Czechoslovakia 0 England 1 Kuwait 0	SEMI-FINALS Italy 2 Poland 0 West Germany 3 France 3 (W Germany won 5-4 on pens)
GROUP B England 0 West Germany 0 England 0 Spain 0	FINAL Italy 3 W Germany 1

done well enough on the field - four wins in five matches, including three that carried qualifying points for the 1976 European Championship - but he had come across a dearth of influential talent.

"I hadn't realised how important it had been at Leeds to have players from the other home countries," he said. "We had internationals in every position but half of them weren't English. After only a few months with the England team I sensed that I'd walked into trouble."

Reve, in fact, had been alerted to the problem by Les Cocker, who had left Leeds to

work alongside him. When a part-timer on Ramsey's staff, Cocker realised that players with ability to handle international football were not coming forward. "Les warned me about it when I asked him to join me," Reve said, "but I thought he was being unnecessarily pessimistic. As a club manager you sometimes lose sight of the wider picture. But it wasn't long before I knew that we weren't good enough."

When England were nudged out of a place in the European Championship finals, Reve knew how difficult it would be to qualify for the 1978 World

Cup in Argentina, especially when they were drawn in a qualifying group with Italy. A 2-0 loss in Rome in November 1976 filled Reve with gloom. "We weren't in the same league," he confided.

By the summer of 1977, England's absence from the World Cup finals looked like running to at least 12 years. Missing from England's match in Brazil, the first of three on a summer tour, Reve returned from clandestine negotiations to seek an assurance from the FA that Bobby Robson had not been lined up as his replacement. When this was not forth-

coming, Reve took a decision that scandalised English football and branded him as a traitor. He walked out.

In an effort to restore dignity, the FA turned to Roy Greenwood, who should have been appointed in the first place. One of English football's best brains, Greenwood, by then in late middle-age, was approaching the end of his career at West Ham, unhappy with the role of consultant.

A 2-0 defeat of Italy at Wembley, when their only chance of reaching Argentina was victory by six or seven goals, meant that England would miss another World Cup.

Three years later England found themselves up against it again following a defeat in Switzerland. They were rescued by a 3-1 victory against Hungary in Budapest, where Trevor Brooking, one of Greenwood's students at West Ham, scored a glorious goal which meant that England went through to the 1982 finals.

Greenwood felt that he had a chance. He had the respect of senior players in the squad and a number of talented youngsters, including the Arsenal left-back, Kenny Sansom, and Manchester United's dynamic midfielder, Bryan Robson.

Sansom first came to Greenwood's attention in an outstanding Crystal Palace youth team and he was thrilled to be called on for the finals in Spain. "Every footballer who gets to a World Cup for the first time says that it's the stuff of dreams, but you have to be there to know how thrilling it is," Sansom said recently. "It gives you such a buzz. All the best players are

there, men you don't normally come up against, posing different problems from League matches. It's like nothing else a player ever comes across."

England started well, defeating France 3-1 in Bilbao, their first goal coming from Bryan Robson after less than 30 seconds. "From a throw-in that I was supposed to take," Sansom said. "Instead, Steve Coppell picked up the ball and when Terry Butcher flicked it on there was Robbo, bingo, a goal. Afterwards we learned what we had already guessed, that it was the quickest in the history of the World Cup."

England topped their group with further victories over Czechoslovakia and Kuwait, but Brooking and Kevin Keegan were still missing because of nagging injuries. "It seemed to be taking a long time for them to get over them and things didn't look good when Kevin flew to Germany for treatment," Sansom added.

A 0-0 draw with West Germany in Madrid meant that England needed to beat Spain, while scoring at least two goals, to qualify for the semi-finals. With 27 minutes left the game was goalless and Greenwood sent on Brooking and Keegan as substitutes. Immediately, Brooking should have scored but shot straight at the Spanish goalkeeper. Shortly afterwards, Keegan headed wide. "No excuses, I should have scored," Keegan said. England were out and Greenwood was on his way into retirement.

"We just couldn't score," Sansom said. "If only Gary Lineker had come along a bit sooner."

Baggio set to join Ronaldo at Inter

ITALIAN striker Roberto Baggio will almost definitely join Internazionale for the next Serie A season, a club spokesman said yesterday.

The 31-year-old striker has yet to sign a contract, and the deal is not yet official but it could come as early as today, said the spokesman. Baggio earned a place on Italy's World Cup squad with a late surge for Bologna. He finished the season with 22 goals, fourth-best in the league.

At Inter, he would be paired with the Brazilian Ronaldo, who joined the club last summer and helped them win the Uefa Cup and finish second in the league. Baggio is likely to sign a contract for two or three years with Inter, the spokesman said.

The Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta appeared assured of a place in his country's World Cup team, despite a history of differences with head coach Daniel Passarella.

As Passarella confirmed the shirt numbers assigned to each player, the apparent starting team included two surprises:

Carlos Roa in the goal instead of Hector Burgos, and left back Hector Pineda instead of Javier Zanetti.

Batistuta, the Fiorentina striker, was given the No 9 shirt. Ariel Ortega, the skilful Valencia midfielder, received the No 10 shirt which Diego Maradona wore in the last four World Cups.

The South Korean striker Hwang Sun-hong could miss the World Cup after injuring his knee in yesterday's 1-1 draw against China. The experienced 29-year-old Pohang Steelers forward was stretchered off the pitch and taken to hospital after being hurt in a tackle 14 minutes into the warm-up game.

"Hwang has problems with his knee," South Korea coach Cha Bum-Kun said. "He is a very important player to me but we must wait and see what his condition is."

"We had trouble in attack in his absence today," Bum-Kun added. "The Chinese were playing rough, and our players stood back a bit to avoid injuries."

Hartson stalls on new deal

AS West Ham's Welsh striker John Hartson flew into Tunisia last night to face England's first World Cup rivals with his country, his club future looked less certain.

Hartson - who is believed to want £200,000 a week to sign a new deal - has been stalling over signing a three-year extension to his current extension, and last week was the subject of a bid from Blackburn.

West Ham put a £10m price tag on their top scorer - before saying he was out for sale and Blackburn Rovers manager Roy Hodgson splashed out £7.5m on Southampton's Kevin Davies instead. Hartson has been in brilliant form for the Ham-

mers and scored the second goal in Wales's 3-0 win in Malta on Wednesday.

Leeds and Aston Villa are anxiously awaiting a decision from Alan Thompson after holding talks with the Bolton midfielder. The two clubs are in a straight fight for the 24-year-old, with Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale and Aston Villa supremo Doug Ellis both prepared to spend £4m to secure his services.

Coventry are hoping to quickly complete the £700,000 signing of Jean Guy Wallemme from French champions Lens while newly-promoted Bristol City have signed Fulham striker Tony Thorpe for £1m.

Joseph Blatter, the Fifa presidential hopeful, emphasised his commitment to award the 2006 World Cup to an African country as he hit the campaign trail in battle-torn Liberia.

Blatter, who met with local football officials and Liberian star George Weah, also promised to increase funding to sport programmes in this West African country which in 1996 emerged from seven years of civil war.

Celtic yesterday dismissed their assistant head coach Murdoch MacLeod, who was Wim Janse's No 2. In a short statement, the Parkhead side announced that MacLeod had his contract terminated.

Brighton close to securing temporary home

BRIGHTON and Hove Albion have taken another step towards playing at Withead Stadium next season after two more Council committees gave them permission to become the new tenants of the athletics ground.

Earlier this week planners voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Third Division side's proposals to use the stadium as a temporary home, and a final decision will be made at a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee a week today.

This is subject to the Government's decision whether or not to call a full public inquiry.

The leader of Brighton and Hove Council, Lord Bassam, is pushing for a quick decision to be made and doubts if the government will intervene.

Plymouth Argyle have been fined £6,000 and warned to their future conduct by the Football Association after admitting operating a no-win lottery. The West Country club were found to be in breach of 700 mis-

conduct rule by a disciplinary commission in London.

An FA spokesman said: "Plymouth admitted they were guilty of operating a no-win policy on their Cash-Line Lottery on six occasions." The club were also ordered to pay £5,000 costs.

Neville Southall has applied for the vacant manager's job at Bury, the club where he began his illustrious career. Southall left Gigg Lane in 1980 to join Everton where he went on to make over 700 appearances.

Le Mans '98

The energy from a bolt of lightning is enough to power Paris for one year. Even more amazing, the energy unleashed by the R390 at Le Mans 24 hrs is enough to take cover, the Nissan R390 is about to strike power a Formula One car for an entire 17-race, Grand Prix season. Little wonder that Nissan cars just keep going on and on and on... 24hrs a day.

NISSAN

Le Mans '98

هكذا من الأصل

Seles turns on the power to stun Hingis

Tennis

By John Roberts
in Paris

MONICA SELES was absolutely radiant on the Centre Court at the French Open yesterday, reminding the tennis world of the tenacious excellence that was all but lost the day she was stabbed in the back while playing in Hamburg five years ago.

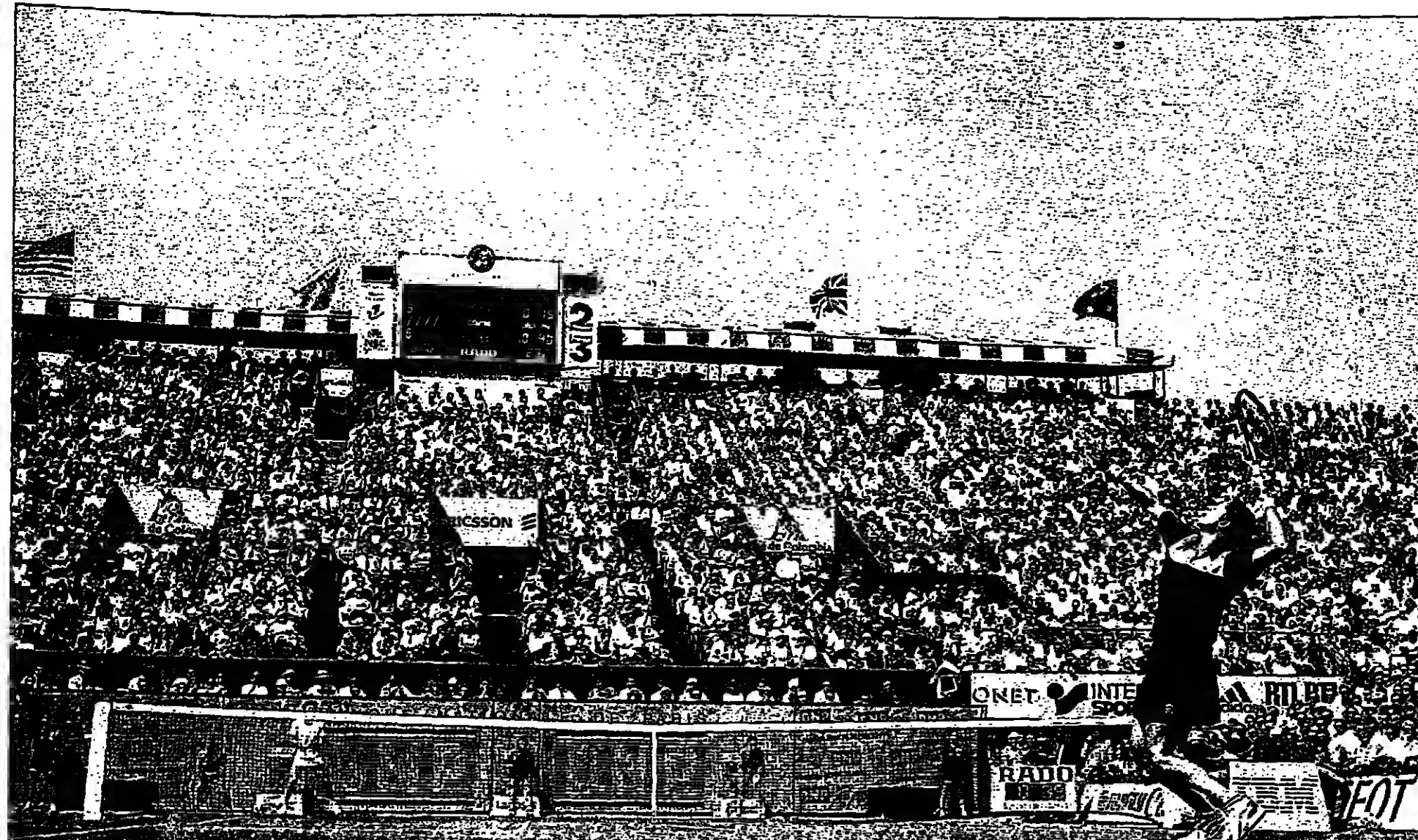
Martina Hingis, the latest teenage sensation, might have defeated Seles in their five previous matches, but in reality this was the first occasion on which the 24-year-old former world No 1 had been more than a shadow of the great player she was.

The experience, a 6-3, 6-2 defeat, rudely interrupted the 17-year-old Swiss's quest to complete her collection of the four Grand Slam singles titles and put Seles in tomorrow's final against the 26-year-old Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, just like in the good old days. All that remains is for Steffi Graf to return for Wimbledon in little more than a fortnight's time, a prospect which appears more promising by the day.

Before readers hasten to jog your correspondent's memory that Seles did soar into the final of the 1995 United States Open on her comeback, 27 months after the attack in Germany, and actually won the Australian Open in January, 1996, it must be emphasised that her performance yesterday was reminiscent of the electricity she brought to sport when winning the first eight of her Grand Slam titles.

The circumstances surrounding Seles's appearance here only 12 days after the death of her father and coach, Karoly, added a poignant dimension to her victory, which she described as "a little bit of sunshine after so many clouds".

Her immediate reaction after securing the match point, after 69 minutes, was to turn and



Monica Seles plays to the crowd as she serves to Martina Hingis during her semi-final victory over the world No 1 in the French Open yesterday

Photograph: Empics

make a clenched fist salute to her mother, Esther, who was seated beside her agent, Mark McCormack, who has played an important role in her rehabilitation as a player and a person.

A year ago, Hingis defeated Seles in the semi-finals here, 6-7, 7-5, 6-4, which was acknowledged as a creditable performance by the Yugoslavian-born American, given her struggle to maintain a high level of fitness and commitment during her father's long illness.

Moreover, Hingis already had become the youngest Grand Slam champion of the century in Australia. Although lacking the stamina to prevent Iva Majoli from beating her in the final at Roland Garros, Hingis went on to win Wimbledon and the US Open and to make a successful title defence in Australia.

Yesterday, having advanced to the semi-finals with a straight sets win against her 17-year-old American rival, Venus Williams, Hingis finally discovered the

Seles she marvelled at as a nine-year-old watching matches on television.

Here, grunting with a vengeance, was the two-handed demon of the courts, raking the lines and pinpointing the corners with her ground strokes, and prepared to run down every seemingly lost cause.

"There are players, like Mary Pierce and Venus, who have power like that, but not from every corner of the court, as Monica has," Hingis said. "She

just hits everything very hard and very aggressive from every part of the court. Usually she makes more mistakes, or she gets a little bit tired, but today she just didn't. She's back, in better shape, probably, than ever."

Seles, while complimenting the work of her coach, the Australian Gavin Hopper, stressed that she is only at the beginning of a fresh commitment. "I want to play even better than I did in 1990, and all those years," she said. "but in the past

five years some things were just more important to my life to concentrate on the tennis game."

"Hopefully nothing beyond my control will happen to me in the next few years, so I can work really hard. I really feel that where my game will have to go, because women's tennis has changed so much, and it's going to keep changing. You have to change with the times."

Asked again if she had dedicated her performance to her father, she said, "No, my dad just

really wanted me to do what I wanted to do. Tennis is one of the things that I love to do. I miss him tremendously, but, win or lose, it doesn't make a difference in me thinking about my dad."

Seles has won all but two of her 16 previous matches against Sanchez Vicario, who defeated the American Lindsay Davenport, 6-3, 7-6, in a semi-final memorable for 15 serve breaks and 85 unforced errors to 144 points. Davenport was responsible for 56 of them.

Black's heart defect revealed

Athletics

By Mike Rowbottom

ROGER BLACK spoke yesterday about the fear he has lived with throughout his athletic career because of a serious heart defect. The British team captain reveals to a book due out later this month that at the age of 11 he was diagnosed as having a congenitally infected valve in his heart, something he has kept a secret to all but a close circle of people. His condition has required him to have annual check-ups at Southampton General Hospital.

He said: "I have lived with the fear of knowing that I could walk out of the doors having been told that I could never do sport again."

Black's career - in which he has won European and Commonwealth 400 metres titles and two Olympic silver medals - has been a rollercoaster ride of achievement and injury. But the heart problem which forced him to give up for a period as a schoolboy has been known only to his family and associates.

As recently as 1985, the year Black won the European Junior heart specialist wrote to his father expressing reservations about the severe training he was undergoing. "I have to do this for reasons you will appreciate," the specialist wrote. Black's father, a GP until he retired in 1991, also suffers from a heart condition, although of a different type. Black also reveals how he suffered a serious heart scare in 1989, shortly after returning from a two-year absence with a foot injury. He was rushed to hospital when doctors suspected he had a potentially serious heart infection which might have required open heart surgery - and would have meant the end of his career.

After undergoing a week of tests, his problem was diagnosed as being a combination of pneumonia and psittacosis, a viral infection which can be caught from parrots.

Black, now 32 and due to retire after this season's European Championships, has missed only one heart check-up in the last 21 years. That was in 1996, as he was preparing to earn the first Olympic medal of his career. "Whatever it was told," he said, "I knew that that year of all years I would not have stopped running for anything."

How long's the course? Roger Black: My autobiography is published on 23 June

Players fail to oust Williams

Snooker

REX WILLIAMS yesterday won his battle to keep his place as the head of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association.

Eight of the game's leading players, including Stephen Hendry and John Higgins, had tried to overthrow Williams, the chairman of the WPBSA, and his fellow directors. For months, there has been a bitter conflict between the two sides, but at an extraordinary general meeting in Preston yesterday, a resolu-

tion to remove the directors of the Association was defeated by 38 votes to 34.

"I'm naturally pleased with the result and now I want to work with everyone to ensure the game prospers. It is imperative for the sake of the game that we have unity," Williams said. "The game needs change. Hopefully now we'll be allowed to get on with it and implement the changes we want."

"If I don't think I can achieve what I want to achieve, I will go away. I'm 65 and want to go back and enjoy what I was doing in my retirement."

Coulthard still optimistic

Motor racing

DAVID COULTHARD faces the biggest test of his title credentials in the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal on Sunday and yesterday insisted that he is out of championship contention.

Coulthard knows he cannot afford to let McLaren teammate Mika Hakkinen extend his 17 points advantage at the top with the mid-way point of the season drawing near.

"The pressure will be on the 27-year-old Scot and he said:

"Mika's advantage might seem quite a lot, but things can change very quickly in Formula One," said Coulthard, who saw his title hopes suffer when a blown engine sent him out of contention in Monaco last time out. "I'm not going to let the title go by any means. I still think I have a very good chance of winning it this year."

"I was unbalanced in Monaco with the engine going. But the same thing could happen to Mika at some stage - these things even out over the season. "But I'm confident that I can do well in Montreal this week-

end. I was looking good there last year until a pit-stop went wrong, so there's no reason why I can't win this time."

Jacques Villeneuve insisted yesterday that he could defy the odds stacked against him and keep hold of his world title. Villeneuve goes into his home race trailing Hakkinen by 38 points after collecting only eight points from the opening six races.

But the Canadian believes changes to the rear-end of the Williams, which he tested in Monza, last week can see him fighting for victories from now on.

Law has qualifying success

Sailing

DEFENDING champion Chris Law yesterday beat co-favourite Gavin Brady in his final pair of qualifying matches at the Hoya Lyngbyen Cup. For good measure, Law then caught the man who had been second overall, Bertrand Pacé, in their pre-start manoeuvres.

It was the French former world champion's second such mistake of the day, the first conceded to Brady, as the 14 rounds of knock-out matches

for the 12 competitors were completed. Law then won the match at a trot. These three topped the rankings to find the top six who sail each other for today's semi-final places.

There was a delay to allow the light south-westerly to develop on the 600-yard track inside Hurst Spit, off Keyhaven. Britain's Andy Green was knocked out, but Ian Williams, made the cut behind Per Peterson of Sweden and Murray Jones of New Zealand. Law's pace was then disrupted as he lost to Williams in his first semi-final qualifier.

Sporting Digest

Jordan falls at first hurdle

Basketball

MICHAEL JORDAN, the Chicago Bulls guard and NBA superstar who was said to be worth \$10m to his sport earlier this week, was brought down to earth on Wednesday night when the Chicago Bulls, the reigning NBA champions, lost their first game in this year's best-of-seven final series to the Utah Jazz, 88-85.

The Bulls, who started as the favourites, have dominated the NBA in recent years, including five consecutive championships starting in 1991. When they played the last game of their play-offs against the Indiana Pacers, over 20 million people watched on television.

Sprinters race to find fastest

Athletics

BRITAIN'S top sprinters are set to go head-to-head this summer in a three-race series to find the "Fastest Man in Britain".

The winner will collect £6,000 in prize money, provided by lottery company Nivea, who will spend around £100,000 each year supporting British athletics over the next three years.

Darren Braithwaite, Darren Campbell and Julian Golding, the World Championship 4x100 metres relay bronze medal winners, will feature in the Nivea Men's British Sprint Challenge at Bedford on 5 July, at the BUPA Games in Gateshead on 19 July and at the British Grand Prix in Sheffield on 2 August.

Athletics

Only 60,000 of the 120m tickets for September's Commonwealth Games in Malaysia have been sold. Sukron 98, the organising body, said it is confident domestic sales will pick up when ticket courses open across the country next month, but have launched an appeal to raise funds for the Games for a shortfall of \$3m (p.222m).

Ashia Hansen, the world triple jump champion, will compete in three events for Sherriffshire Athletics when they open the defence of their British Women's League title at Alexander Stadium, Birmingham, tomorrow.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Baltimore 3 Boston 0; Toronto 1 Detroit 1; NY Yankees 7 Tampa 1; Chicago White Sox 10 Kansas City 5; Minnesota 3 Cleveland 2; Anaheim 8 Seattle 1; Texas 16 Oakland 10.

National League

Florida 1; San Francisco 0 Cincinnati 0; Pittsburgh 3 NY Mets 0; Atlanta 5 Milwaukee 2; Montreal 6 Philadelphia 2; Colorado 3 Arizona 2; Houston 8 San Diego 2; Los Angeles 7 St Louis 4.

Basketball

NBA play-off final: Utah 85 Chicago 85 (Utah lead best-of-seven championship series 1-0).

Boxing

Rene Weiler, the German who was the European lightweight champion from 1984 to 85 and again for a short time in 1988, has been arrested in Korea for allegedly selling cocaine.

Crickets

SECOND TEST (Galle, second day)

New Zealand won toss

NEW ZEALAND - First innings

N Jaffer not out 48

C O McLellan 5

B A C Pearce not out 122

Total (for 5, 73 overs) 122

Full (100): 5-103

To bat: C Z Harris, C L Cairns, P J Wiseman, G O'Connor

Bowling (no ball): Wickramasinghe 7-1-20; (8) S M Murali 6-3-31; (9) S M Murali 6-3-31; (10) S M Murali 6-3-31; (11) S M Murali 6-3-31; (12) S M Murali 6-3-31; (13) S M Murali 6-3-31; (14) S M Murali 6-3-31; (15) S M Murali 6-3-31; (16) S M Murali 6-3-31; (17) S M Murali 6-3-31; (18) S M Murali 6-3-31; (19) S M Murali 6-3-31; (20) S M Murali 6-3-31; (21) S M Murali 6-3-31; (22) S M Murali 6-3-31; (23) S M Murali 6-3-31; (24) S M Murali 6-3-31; (25) S M Murali 6-3-31; (26) S M Murali 6-3-31; (27) S M Murali 6-3-31; (28) S M Murali 6-3-31; (29) S M Murali 6-3-31; (30) S M Murali 6-3-31; (31) S M Murali 6-3-31; (32) S M Murali 6-3-31; (33) S M Murali 6-3-31; (34) S M Murali 6-3-31; (35) S M Murali 6-3-31; (36) S M Murali 6-3-31; (37) S M Murali 6-3-31; (38) S M Murali 6-3-31; (39) S M Murali 6-3-31; (40) S M Murali 6-3-31; (41) S M Murali 6-3-31; (42) S M Murali 6-3-31; (43) S M Murali 6-3-31; (44) S M Murali 6-3-31; (45) S M Murali 6-3-31; (46) S M Murali 6-3-31; (47) S M Murali 6-3-31; 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